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Heading for Thucydides's Trap — Athar Mansoor

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The Drums of WAR in Asia

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Surah-20 Ta Ha/ Ayat 6: To Him belongs what is in the heavens and on earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil.

A game of chess in the Himalayas

The world order is indeed in a flux nowadays. From changing dynamics in the Middle East to clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh, from Russia's resurgence to the world stage to the growing isolation of the United States, the world is changing rapidly. This is leading to growing militarization of international relations due to which basic human rights of individuals are being sacrificed on the altar of national interest, or more rightly nationalism. This is what Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, rightly pointed out in his online address to the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly, when he said, "Today, the foundations of the 'world order'– non-use of or threat of unilateral force, self-determination of peoples, the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, international cooperation – all these ideals are being systematically eroded. International agreements are being flouted and set aside. Renewed great-power rivalries are leading to a new arms race. Conflicts are proliferating and intensifying. Military occupation and illegal annexations are suppressing the rights of human beings to self-determination."

The most notable manifestation of great-power rivalry which PM Khan alluded to is a perpetuated India-China standoff in the Himalayas. Starting from sporadic incidents of physical fight between the soldiers from two belligerent nations, the situation has reached such an extreme that gunshots were fired at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in around 45 years. Given its fragile economy and a weaker military capability than China, India would not have dared to up the ante and raise stakes with China. It is also to be noted here that— in the words of Sumit Ganguly, a distinguished professor of political science and Indiana University—"short of capitulating to China on its border dispute, India has no choice but to turn to what scholars of international relations refer to as external balancing—seeking the support of a more powerful state to secure one's national security interests. In turn, the United States, which has witnessed China's increasing aggressiveness from the South China Sea to the Taiwan Straits and now in the Himalayas, has powerful incentives to bolster its strategic partnership with India. India's naval assets as well as its base facilities in the Indian Ocean make it a useful partner."

That's why experts believe that it is the United States on whose behest India is out to challenge its mighty neighbour. Both India and the United States have conducted joint military exercises and seem to have been in regular contact, including regarding the Sino-Indian confrontation. Several high-profile statements from senior US officials and lawmakers supporting India bear testimony to this fact. As US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, said in a presser: From the Taiwan Strait to the Himalayas and beyond, the Chinese Communist Party is engaged in a clear and intensifying pattern of bullying its neighbours. That bullying is also evident in the South China Sea ... the United States imposed sanctions and visa restrictions on Chinese individuals and entities responsible for the CCP's imperialism there, doing things such as unlawful energy surveillance, activities in the economic zones of our ally the Philippines and other countries."

Moreover, on June 2, Indian premier Narendra Modi and US President Trump had a telephone call. Its readout stated that the two leaders talked about the Sino-Indian border tensions. Also, while speaking at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London, US Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper criticized China for engaging in "systematic rule-breaking, coercion and other malign activities." To a question on the Sino-Indian border situation, he said that the US is "monitoring it very closely and what's happening along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)." Esper later retweeted a media story reporting his remarks that the US was following the situation "very closely," adding the comment, "Very closely indeed."

It is also evident from the fact that in contrast to the present tensions, during the 2017 Doklam confrontation, there were no standalone statements, although the Trump administration spokespeople and unnamed officials did comment on it in a manner that fit Indian objectives. Although the US-China rivalry was so emphatically brandished in the past, the cat is out of the bag now. Since Trump's imposition of tariffs leading to a colossal trade war to open China-bashing at prestigious world forums like the United Nations, things have been heading to the so-called Thucydides's Trap— the dangerous dynamic that occurs when a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power. The United States now openly declares China as its top enemy and is gradually playing its cards. And, President Trump considers India his trump card against China. That's why the United States has invested billions of dollars in augmenting India's defence capabilities. It is on Trump's prodding that Modi seems hell bent on going to a war with China.

India is being used as a pawn by the United States in the latter's covert war with China. But it needs to understand that depending on others is never a wise option. Modi should also recognize that this part of the world can develop only if there is an environment of peace and stability here. War should never be an option for developing countries. Hence, Modi should shun his jingoistic policies and let the peace and stability in the region prevail and prosper. Modi must learn from the experiences of other countries that the United States is not a very reliable partner, even if it calls India a 'major defense partner'.

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Letters to the Editor

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Low-cost Housing in Pakistan

Naya Pakistan Housing Project is one of the ambitious schemes that Prime Minister Imran Khan has set his mind to. If successful, the NPHP could reap a lot of benefits for the country, the most apparent one being the provision of housing to lower-income groups. Housing financing by banks in Pakistan is a serious issue which PMIK has correctly identified and has attempted to resolve by incentivising banks and investors. The government has promised low-interest rates for the loans—5 to 7 percent. While this is important to ensure that housing stays affordable and feasible in the long run, a big issue still is the term of these loans. The length of time afforded for them to be paid back, any deductibles if that length is exceeded, and a well-thought-out plan for repayment also needs to be sketched out. While increasing ownership of homes is a great way to uplift social mobility, we have all seen how badly housing markets can crash. So, every step of the plan needs to be considered.

Abdullah bin Aziz
Lahore

Why Crimes are Increasing?

The two main reasons behind increasing crimes rates in Pakistan are: unemployment and offenders going scot-free. When there are no job opportunities available in the country for people, they will definitely try to earn money through shortcuts, and it often leads them to crimes, e.g. robbery, buying and selling illegal and contraband things, drug dealing, killing, and so on. A person who is unemployed will be more likely to engage in crimes than an individual who is employed. Another major reason is corruption and bribery. Nowadays, rape cases are on the rise and rapists know that such issues will run on social and electronic media for short time and then everyone will forget those. The administration should provide job opportunities to youth so that they do not go for money through illegal activities. To curb crimes, the government should revamp police and justice system immediately so that the perpetrators are awarded exemplary punishments.

Faizullah Jatoi
Larkana

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PMIK's Address to UNGA

Prime Minister Imran Khan's virtual address to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 25 was really impressive. Its effectiveness can be gauged by the reaction of the Indian delegation. At first, the walkout in protest when PMIK began highlighting the atrocities in Occupied Kashmir and then the ridiculous and delusional response; all signs indicate that he struck a nerve. It is amusing that the Indian delegation felt that PMIK had "no reasonable suggestion to offer the world". If they were paying more attention, they might have learnt a thing or two about managing to keep people from starving during a pandemic, climate policies such as the billion-tree tsunami and the need to take collective action against illegal and untraceable outflows of money to tax havens. All of these are pressing policy problems that we are confronting, and a united approach from the international community is pressingly needed. Quite naturally, the Indian government is feeling the heat from Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to bring the Kashmir issue and its Islamophobic policies to centre stage. PMIK did well to highlight all of this, and no longer can India obfuscate the truth. The world now knows that India may attempt a false-flag operation. The international community has recognised that Kashmiris are being marginalised by the military siege across the border, and no amount of fuming or angry replies is going to change any of that.

Sajjad Ali Kanwal
Rawalpindi

Elections in Gilgit-Baltistan

Elections in Gilgit-Baltistan are scheduled to be held in October. Considering the political atmosphere in the region, the question of full constitutional representation for GB is likely to be a key election issue. People of this region yearn for full integration with Pakistan. Those who control GB's destiny in Islamabad must listen to the people's voices and resolve the region's issues through democratic means. Unless GB is given genuine reforms, the sense of alienation amongst local people will grow. The region has immense potential economically insofar as its tourism sector is concerned, as well as abundant natural resources, while it is the gateway for CPEC. With a fully representative government, the region can stand on its own with an educated population keen to develop their area. The PTI-led federal government, as well as other parties in parliament, need to come up with a bold, democratic solution for the region. For example, locals resent the fact that the unelected GB Council has more powers than the elected legislative assembly. This anomaly must be rectified at the earliest.

Muhammad Ahmad Farooq
Chakwal

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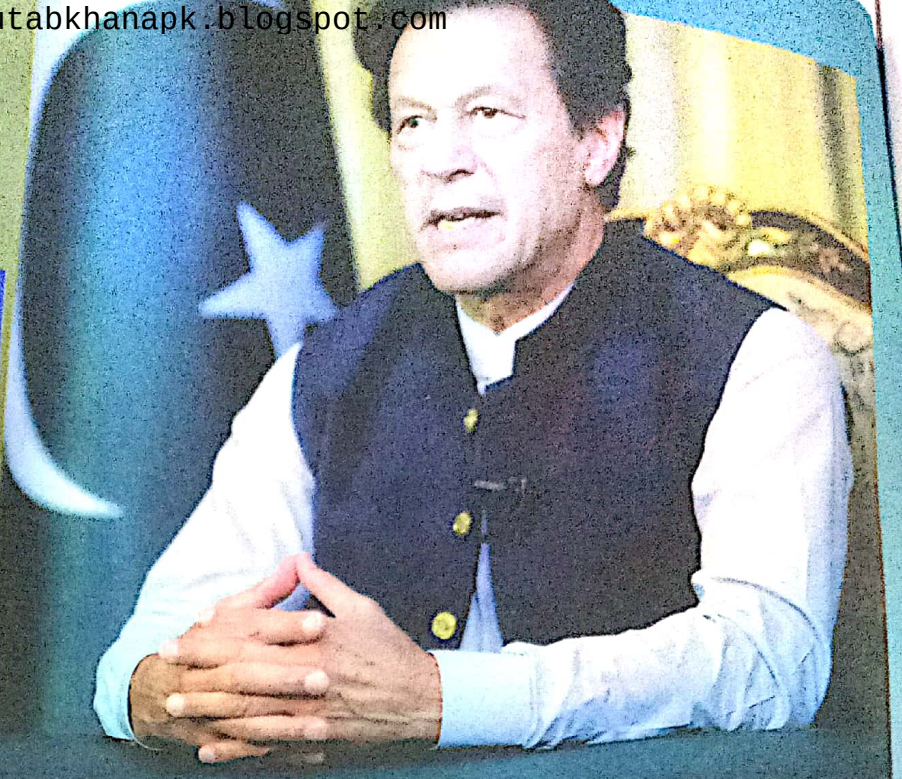
IMRAN KHAN'S UNGA ADDRESS



On September 25, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, addressed the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). In his online speech, PMIK covered a broad range of themes, including the lack of financial accountability to prevent international white-collar crimes, the imposing challenges of climate change, Pakistan's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the rise of Islamophobia, the authoritarian tendencies of the Modi government and the repression of Kashmiris. Here is a look at important points from his speech:

Climate Change

"Pakistan's contribution to net carbon emissions is minimal; however, Pakistan is one of the countries most affected by climate change," he said, raising concerns about the poverty-stricken and destitute masses which would face enormous risks as a result. Citing increased global temperatures, flooding in low-lying coastal regions and wildfires in California, PMIK said, "We should be very worried, for our future generations ... commitments made through the Paris Agreement must be fulfilled, including the commitment to mobilize $100 billion annually."

RSS-BJP nexus in India

PMIK said, "While the Nazis' hate was directed at the Jews, the RSS directs it at the Muslims, and to a lesser extent, Christians." He stated that the extremist ideology of Hindu supremacists and extremists rationalises that India is exclusively for Hindus. The Prime Minister touched also upon the Modi government's discriminatory policies against Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic, stating that the government blamed the minority group for spreading the coronavirus, and said that they were subjected to target killings "with police complicity in Delhi".

Indian Aggression in IIJOK

As reflective of his previous UNGA address in September 2019, PMIK raised concerns about the blatant human rights abuses in IIJOK. He termed India's attempt to annex IIJOK on August 5 not only illegal and against the terms of the Geneva Conventions, but also against the commitments India had made to the people of Kashmir and to the world. He added that "Indian occupation forces have used brute force including pellet guns, against peaceful protestors." The Prime Minister drew the attention of international community to killing of countless Kashmiris in fake encounters by Indian occupation forces. He made it clear that any hope of a durable peace in South Asia will never materialise unless the Kashmir issue is resolved, as it could prove to be a potential 'nuclear flashpoint'. He implored the international community to prosecute the Indian civil and military personnel for their "crimes against humanity" in IIJOK.

Resolve to Retaliate Indian Aggression

The Prime Minister stated that if the fascist RSS-led Indian government decides to commit any "misadventure" against Pakistan, it will be met by "a nation that is ready to fight till the end for its freedom"

Pakistan's Smart Lockdown Policy

The Prime Minister credited his "smart lockdown" policy for steering the country out of the pandemic, without pushing the poor further into the grip of poverty. Khan credited the government's Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme—the biggest cash transfer programme in the country's history—distributing 150 billion rupees to nearly 12 million households across the country, to provide financial support in the midst of the pandemic.

International Financial Accountability

PMIK spoke out against the flow of illicit financing from developing countries to developed ones, stating that these "stolen resources" can have adverse impact on emerging economies. He said that developed countries lacked the collective political will to "curb this criminal activity". The Prime Minister called upon the United Nations to "take the lead in efforts to build a global framework, to stem the illicit financial flows, and to ensure speedy repatriation of stolen wealth."

Combatting Islamophobia

The Prime Minister touched upon the issue of Islamophobia, stating that "Muslims continue to be targeted with impunity in many countries." He suggested that the UNGA should declare an "International Day to Combat Islamophobia" and build a coalition to fight this scourge.

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Two and a half millennia ago, an ancient Greek historian Thucydides identified the risk of a deadly trap a ruling and a rising power can fall into. While explaining how the two leading city-states of classical Greece ended up in a devastating war, he wrote, "It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable."

United States and China
Heading for Thucydides's Trap

Athar Mansoor

Thucydides's concerns were recently echoed by Graham Allison in his book, "Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?" An outcome of a decade-long research project, Allison's book drew similarities between the rise of China against the United States and that of Athens against Sparta and warned, "China and the US are currently on a collision course for war—unless both parties take difficult and painful actions to avert it."

Although Allison believes that a war between the United States and China is not inevitable and that Thucydides's claim about inevitability of war between a ruling and a rising power was an exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis, I disagree. I rather argue that the various developments in the US-China bilateral relationship, in the last six years, ring the alarm bells: extreme danger ahead. Both the countries are heading to a point of no return and the bitterness between the two rivals has permeated into the realms of economics, politics, society and military.

The developments in the two powers' relationship in the past six years are dangerous and the future course appears more pernicious. I, therefore, contend that war between the two is inevitable, albeit not in the traditional sense and not on their own soils. Trade war is one such example of how novel ways can be adopted to undermine each other. However, the United States being the initiator of the trade war, vividly shows how the rise of China has instilled fear in the US administrations and unless both the parties take difficult actions, other types of war, including proxy wars, are inevitable.

Taking the readers chronologically through the developments of the past six years will substantiate my argument. The relationship between Washington and Beijing has been deteriorating since May 2014 when the US Department of Justice indicted five Chinese hackers for

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their alleged ties to China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) on charges of stealing trade technology from some US companies. China retaliated by suspending its cooperation in the US-China cyber security working group.

A year later, in May 2015, Ashton Carter, the then-US Secretary of Defense, called on China to halt controversial land reclamation efforts in the South China Sea. US officials claimed that they had evidence of China installing military equipment on a chain of artificial islands in the Sea. Satellite images showed that China was developing land on the controversial Subi Reef in the Northern Spratly Islands. Subi Reef is claimed by Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines. China refuted the allegations by claiming that the construction was for civilian purposes.

Going into 2016 and with Trump's entry into the White House, things at best could be described as moving from bad to worse. With just about a year into his office, Trump announced sweeping tariffs on Chinese imports worth more than $50 billion for allegedly stealing US technology and intellectual property. China responded with retaliatory measures on a range of US products. It did not take long for the trade war to escalate. In July 2018, the Trump administration imposed a 25 percent import tax on more than 800 Chinese products. China had to respond with tariffs on more than 500 US products. The US administration used phrases such as China is "ripping off" the US. While China lambasted the Trump administration's moves as "trade bullying."

In late 2018, any efforts to improve the aggravating situation suffered a severe blow when the US Vice President, Mike Pence, clearly indicated that the US would prioritize competition over cooperation by using tariffs to combat the Chinese economic aggression. He was vociferous against Chinese military aggression in the South China Sea, increased censorship and religious persecution by the Chinese government. China denounced Pence's speech as "groundless accusations."

Developments remained on a perilous trajectory when Canada arrested Huawei's chief financial officer on a US request in December 2018. Meng Wanzhou and her company Huawei were alleged to have committed fraud and violation of trade sanctions against Iran. As a tit-for-tat move, China detained two Canadian citizens accusing them of

undermining China's national security. Later, Huawei also sued the United States for banning US federal agencies from using its equipment.

In May 2019, the trade war worsened as the US raised tariffs from 10 to 25 percent on $200 billion worth of Chinese goods with an expectation that this huge step would "force China to make a favourable deal." China also increased tariffs on $60 billion worth of American goods and termed the US expectations as "extravagant." Targeting Huawei, Trump also banned US companies from using foreign-made telecommunications equipment that could threaten the US interests. A couple of months later, Trump administration designated China as "currency manipulator" when People's Bank of China let its yuan devalue significantly.

Serious conflicts did not remain confined to the economic front, and crept into political domain as well. The US signed Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act in 2019, supporting the political unrest in Hong Kong which is currently run as a Special Administrative Region of China. Since 1997, when China took it back from Britain, HKSAR is being governed by China under 'One Country, Two Systems' policy which will remain in force till 2047. China retaliated the US move by imposing sanctions on some US-based organizations and suspended US warships from visiting Hong Kong.

The most recent clash of the titans is in the social and public health domain. Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, accusations have been levelled by both against each other with China claiming that the virus was brought to China by the US military and Trump calling it "Chinese virus." Trump also accused the World Health Organization of being biased towards China, and stopped funding of the organization.

The developments in 2020 have been too fast and too serious to ignore. Tensions have soared as China expelled American journalists, Trump ended Hong Kong's special status after Beijing passed a new national security law and both countries closed several consulates as diplomatic tensions escalated, culminating into US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's remarks that the era of engagement with the Chinese Communist Party is over.

Adding fuel to the fire, the US Department of Defense in early September released a report titled, 'Military Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020.' The report warns that Chinese military developments and

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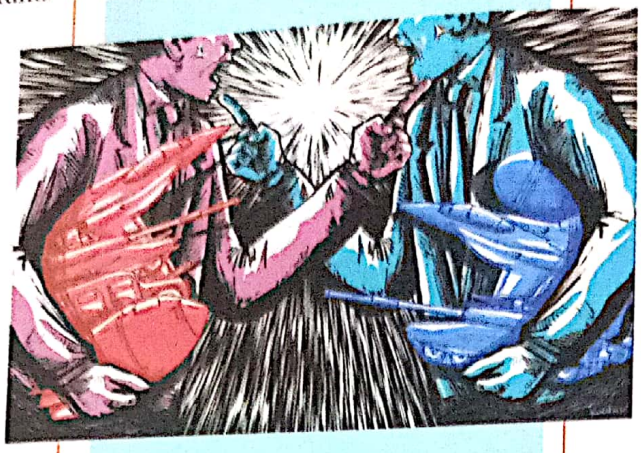
goals would have 'serious' implications for the US national interest and the security of the international order. The report talks about the areas where Chinese military has overtaken the US; for example, in navy where it has at least 57 more submarines and warships than the United States. It further shows that China has built a massive arsenal of land-based ballistic and cruise missiles and has one of the world's largest forces of advanced long-range surface-to-air systems.

China has called the report a "wanton distortion" of China's aims, and the US the biggest threat to the world peace. Colonel Wu Qian, the Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman, labelled the United States as the fomenter of regional unrest and destroyer of world peace citing US actions on Iraq, Syria and



Libya as examples which killed and displaced millions.

This latest development on the military front may have very serious implications for the world peace. I am not portraying a doomsday scenario here; rather, I would like to bring these unprecedented developments in the US-China relationship to the fore so that the world at large may collectively strategize and prevent the two powers from further locking horns. The entire world has a stake in the US-China relationship especially when a tectonic shift in the global power is taking place from the West to the East. Can we prevent them from falling into Thucydides's trap?

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Excerpt from the Preface to "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020"

The PLA's objective is to become a "world-class" military by the end of 2049—a goal first announced by General Secretary Xi Jinping in 2017. Although the CCP has not defined what a "world-class" military means, within the context of the PRC's national strategy it is likely that Beijing will seek to develop a military by mid-century that is equal to—or in some cases superior to—the US military, or that of any other great power that the PRC views as a threat. The PRC has marshalled the resources, technology, and political will over the past two decades to strengthen and modernize the PLA in nearly every respect. Indeed, China is already ahead of the United States in certain areas such as:

Shipbuilding: The PRC has the largest navy in the world, with an overall battle force of approximately 350 ships and submarines including over 130 major surface combatants. In comparison, the US Navy's battle force is approximately 293 ships as of early 2020.

Land-based conventional ballistic and cruise missiles: The PRC has more than 1,250 ground-launched ballistic missiles (GLBMs) and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. The United States currently fields one type of conventional GLBM with a range of 70 to 300 kilometers and no GLCMs.

Integrated air defense systems: The PRC has one of the world's largest forces of advanced long-range surface-to-air systems—including Russian-built S-400s, S-300s, and domestically produced systems—that constitute part of its robust and redundant integrated air defense system architecture.

More striking than the PLA's staggering amounts of new military hardware are the recent sweeping efforts taken by CCP leaders that include completely restructuring the PLA into a force better suited for joint operations, improving the PLA's overall combat readiness, encouraging the PLA to embrace new operational concepts, and expanding the PRC's overseas military footprint.

Despite the PLA's progress over the past 20 years, major gaps and shortcomings remain. The PRC's leaders are aware of these problems, and their strategy envisions the PLA undergoing almost 30 more years of modernization and reform. Of course, the CCP does not intend for the PLA to be merely a showpiece of China's modernity or to keep it focused solely on regional threats. The CCP desires the PLA to become a practical instrument of its statecraft with an active role in advancing the PRC's foreign policy, particularly with respect to the PRC's increasingly global interests and its aims to revise aspects of the international order.

Given the continuity in the PRC's strategic objectives, the past 20 years offer a harbinger for the future course of the PRC's national strategy and military aspirations. Certainly, many factors will determine how this course unfolds. What is certain is that the CCP has a strategic end state that it is working towards, which if achieved and its accompanying military modernization left unaddressed, will have serious implications for US national interests and the security of the international rules-based order.

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"China never intends to and will never interfere in US elections or other US internal affairs. Likewise, the US must abandon its fantasy of remodelling China to US needs."

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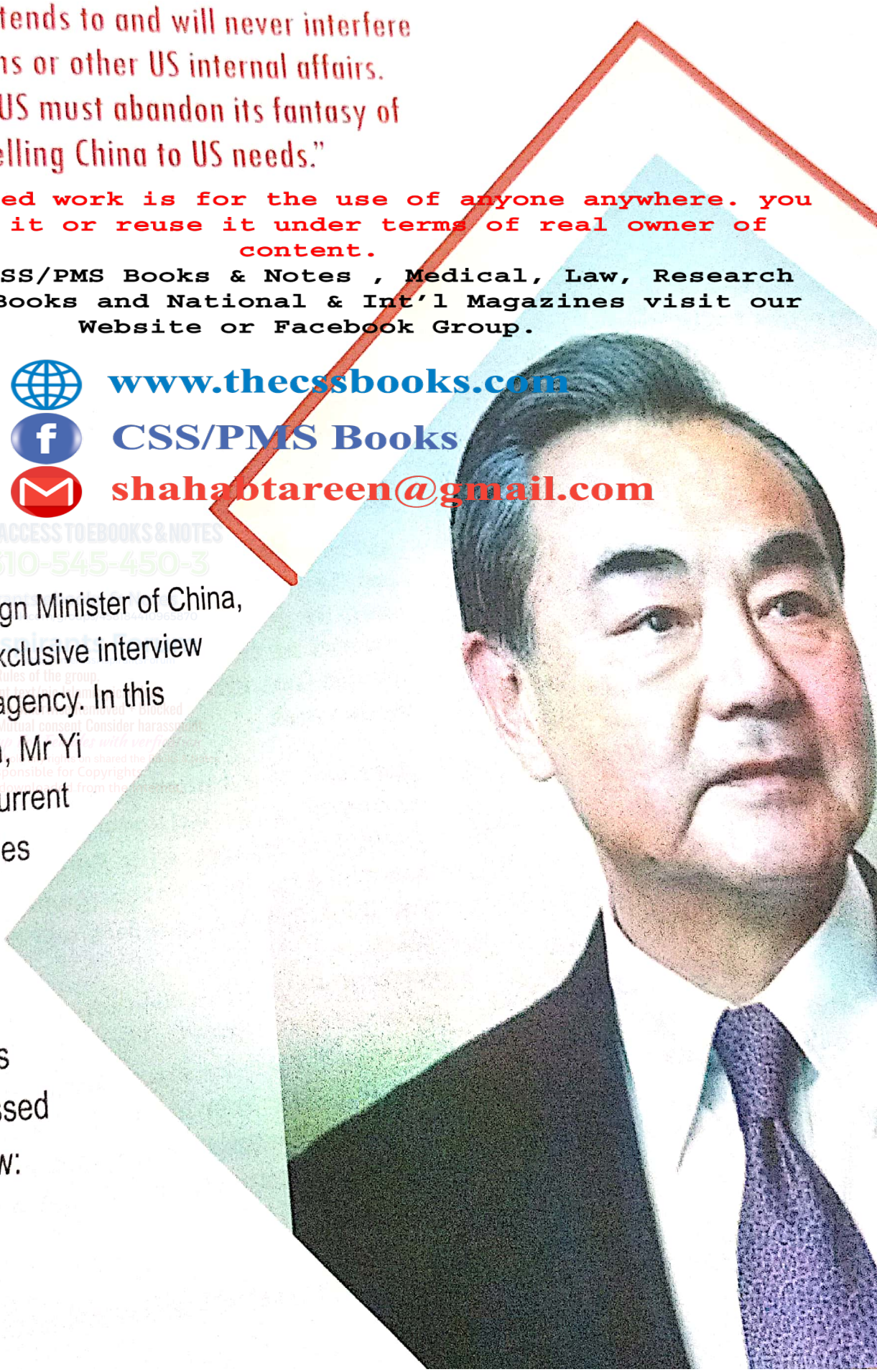
On August 05, Foreign Minister of China, Wang Yi, gave an exclusive interview to a Chinese news agency. In this candid conversation, Mr Yi elaborated on the current state of China-US ties and future prospects. Following is a selection of important questions and matters discussed during the interview:



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Question: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asserted in a recent speech that the policy of engagement with China, pursued by successive US administrations since President Nixon's, has not produced its goal and, thus, has failed. What is your comment?

Answer: The assertion that US policy of engagement with China has failed is just a rehash of the Cold War mentality. It turns a blind eye to all that has been achieved in China-US relations over the past decades, shows ignorance of the historical process and lack of respect for the Chinese and American peoples. This is a political virus.

Over four decades ago, leaders of China and the United States made the handshake across the vast Pacific Ocean. During President Nixon's visit to China in 1972, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai said that China and the US needed to be clear about our differences and find common ground so as to reach a new starting point in bilateral ties. The Shanghai Communiqué issued by the two countries encapsulated their consensus to respect each other and seek common ground while setting aside differences.

What has happened since then demonstrates that this monumental choice made by the two sides was the right one. Over the past 40 years or so, our bilateral ties have become one of the most deeply interwoven relationships in the world with broadest cooperation areas and most extensive common interests.

China and the US now account for over one-third of global economic output and over 50 percent of global growth. Bilateral trade volume has increased by over 250 times since the early days of diplomatic ties, and takes up one-fifth of the global total. Two-way investment has jumped from almost zero to nearly US$240 billion.

Forty years on, while China and the US are quite different in their sociopolitical systems and many other aspects, such differences have not affected the peaceful coexistence of and cooperation between the two countries, and they should not affect their bilateral ties in the future as well. It is neither necessary nor possible for the two sides to change each other. Instead, we should respect the choice independently made by the people of the other side. China's major achievements in the past decades show that 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' fits China and enjoys the most extensive and firm support of the Chinese people.

China will continue to pursue development and progress to meet the desire of its people, and make new, even greater contributions to mankind. Anyone who attempts to derail this process can only end in failure.

Question: Some people in the United States claim that the US has rebuilt China but it has been taken advantage of. Do you think this is the case?

Answer: Sino-US cooperation has never been a case of one party giving favour to, or taking advantage of, the other; both countries have benefitted much from this cooperation. Mutually beneficial cooperation has turned our both countries into a community with shared interests. China has achieved rapid growth in part thanks to its opening-up to and cooperation with the rest of the world, including the US. China's continued growth has also created sustained demand and an enormous market for the US and other countries.

If China-US cooperation is unfair and not reciprocal, how could it have continued for several decades? Actually, globalization and free trade have delivered development dividends, but they have also created tensions for countries and affected their economic structures and distribution of interests. In the globalized world today, the interests of countries are closely intertwined. The development of China and of the US is not a zero-sum game, and we should not reject each other. What we should do is to draw on each other's strength to achieve common development.

As Covid-19 takes its toll on the global economy, China and the US, the world's two largest economies, should work for mutual benefit on an equal footing, stop attempts at decoupling and advance the relationship through cooperation, and live up to their responsibility for the world.

Question: The United States has recently made a number of moves that undermine people-to-people and cultural exchanges with China. Many analysts are concerned that this is a resurgence of McCarthyism. Do you think the two countries will fall into a new Cold War?

Answer: China-US relations are facing the gravest challenge since their establishment, and their exchanges and cooperation in many areas are being seriously disrupted. The root cause is that some Sinophobic American politicians are using their power to smear China with fabrications to impede normal ties with China. What

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they want is to revive McCarthyism in an attempt to undermine US relations with China, stoke hostility between the two peoples, and erode trust between the two countries. Ultimately, they want to drag China and the US into a renewed conflict and confrontation and plunge the world into chaos and division again.

China, however, will not allow these people to get their way. We reject any attempt to create a so-called "new Cold War," because it contravenes the fundamental interests of the Chinese and American peoples and the global trend toward development and progress. The Cold War, which inflicted great sufferings to the world, should not be allowed to repeat itself. Anyone who tries to start a new Cold War in the 21st century will be on the wrong side of history and will only be remembered as the one who has upended international cooperation.

They should also keep in mind that today's China is not the former Soviet Union. We have no intention of becoming another United States either. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China will stay committed to peaceful development and to pursuing an opening-up strategy of mutual benefit. China will continue to promote global peace and development and uphold the international order.

Question: We have noted that the Trump administration shuns dialogue with China, terming it futile. Secretary Pompeo even recently called for taking a "distrust and verify" approach toward China. What is your view on such moves?

Answer: In international relations today, dialogue is the right way for settling issues and building trust. Favouring dialogue over confrontation is not only China's position; it is also the consensus of the overwhelming majority of countries. China and the US are two major countries with different social systems, histories and cultures, and each has its own interests and concerns. This is natural. But what is important is that no one should unilaterally shut the door for dialogue at any time. Difference, misjudgment or confrontation should not be allowed to dominate Sino-US relations.

China is ready to enter into candid, effective consultation with the United States and make cool-headed and sensible response to their impulsive moves and anxieties. We are ready to restart the dialogue mechanisms with the US at any level, in any area and at any time. All issues can be put on the table for discussion. We have proposed that the two countries draw up three lists respectively on cooperation, dialogue and issues that need proper management, and draw up a road map for future interactions. Our message is quite clear: We urge the US to stop acting with arrogance and prejudice, but enter into constructive dialogue with us on an equal footing. We hope that the next US administration will work with us to ease current tensions and put the relations back onto the right track of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation. This serves the shared interests of the two peoples and meets the expectation of the international community.

Question: Recently, Hong Kong has become a prominent issue in China-US relations. The US believes that by enacting the national security legislation, China has given up "One Country, Two Systems" policy. Do you expect the US to make more trouble on Hong Kong issue?

Answer: Hong Kong is part of China's territory and its affairs fall within the domain of China's internal affairs. Non-interference in other countries' internal affairs is a basic norm governing international relations, and no country will allow others to flagrantly sabotage its sovereignty or territorial integrity. At the recent session of the UN Human Rights Council, over 70 countries expressed support of China's just stance and condemned the attempts to use the Hong Kong issue to interfere in China's internal affairs. This speaks volumes about the common and just position of the international community.

National security legislation underpins the very survival of any country, and it is a common legal practice of all countries. The legislation on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong has plugged the long-standing legal loopholes in Hong Kong. It will ensure both the long-term implementation of the policy of One Country, Two Systems on the basis of rule of law and durable security and stability of Hong Kong.

Question: The US is going after Huawei in every possible way, and has declared to build a coalition of "clean countries" to counter China. Many see this as a reflection of US anxiety and fear. What is your take on this?

Answer: Without any solid evidence, the US has launched a global campaign against a private Chinese company. This is a textbook example of bullying. Everyone can see easily and clearly that the US's goal is to keep its monopoly in science and technology but deny other countries the legitimate right to development. It doesn't even bother to disguise its bullying. This not only violates

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the international rules of fair trade, but also hurts the free global market environment.

I would like to stress again that Huawei and many other Chinese companies, unilaterally sanctioned by the US, are innocent. Their technologies and products are safe to use, and they have never done any harm to any country. In stark contrast, the US is behind such scandals as PRISM and ECHELON. It conducts wire-tapping and mass surveillance around the globe, and these wrongful acts are already an open secret. The US is not qualified to build a coalition of "clean countries" because it itself is dirty all over.

The new science and technology revolution, driven by information technology, is picking up speed. China will continue to work with all countries to maintain a fair, just, open and non-discriminatory business environment, promote international exchanges and cooperation in science and technology, and ensure that safe, reliable and quality information technology will boost global economic recovery and help improve people's lives around the world. We hope that the US will give up its obsession with its narrow self-interest, and return to the right track of openness and cooperation.

Question: The China-US relationship is at the most difficult time since the establishment of diplomatic ties. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the relationship between now and the US presidential election in November? What should be the priorities for the two countries at the moment?

Answer: China's US policy is always consistent and stable. In the meantime, we are also prepared for possible bumps and storms ahead. The US move to turn China into an adversary is a fundamental, strategic miscalculation. It means that the US is funneling its strategic resources in the wrong area. We are always ready to develop a China-US relationship featuring no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation based on coordination, cooperation and stability. In the meantime, we will firmly defend our sovereignty, security and development interests, because this is a legitimate right inherent in China being an independent sovereign state. The US should honor the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the UN Charter, learn how to get along with different systems and civilizations and adapt itself to peaceful coexistence, and accept the reality that the world is moving toward multipolarity.

Faced with the most complex situation since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979, we need to put in place a clear-cut framework for the relationship:

First, steer clear of red lines and avoid confrontation. For China-US relations to develop soundly, the most critical thing is mutual respect. China never intends to and will never interfere in US elections or other US internal affairs. Likewise, the US must abandon its fantasy of remodelling China to US needs. It must stop meddling in China's internal affairs, and stop its irrational cracking down on China's legitimate rights and interests.

Second, keep the channels open for candid dialogue. Dialogue is the prerequisite for addressing problems. Without dialogue, problems will only pile up and even get out of control. China's door to dialogue remains open. We are willing, in the spirit of equality and open-mindedness, to talk and interact with the US, and resume dialogue mechanisms at all levels and in all fields.

Third, reject decoupling and uphold cooperation. The interests of the two countries are deeply entwined. Forced decoupling will inflict a lasting impact on bilateral relations, and endanger the security of international industrial chains and interests of all countries. With Covid-19 still raging across the world, China is prepared to have mutually beneficial cooperation with the US on

epidemic control and economic recovery, learn from each other and share experience on containing Covid-19, and join together with the US the global response and multilateral cooperation in fighting Covid-19.

Fourth, abandon the zero-sum mentality and stand up to shared responsibilities. Covid-19 again makes it clear that humanity is a community with a shared future. Our world still faces many global challenges. Traditional and non-traditional security challenges are intertwined. Almost all regional and international hotspot issues require a coordinated response from China, the US and other countries. China and the US must always bear in mind the well-being of mankind, live up to their responsibilities as two major countries, coordinate and cooperate as needed in the UN and other multilateral institutions, and work together for world peace and stability.

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"Every form of government tends to perish by excess of its basic principle. Aristocracy ruins itself by limiting too narrowly the circle within which power is confined; oligarchy ruins itself by the incautious scramble for immediate wealth. In either case the end is revolution ... Then democracy comes: the poor overcome their opponents, slaughtering some and banishing the rest; and give to the people an equal share of freedom and power. But even democracy ruins itself by excess of democracy. Its basic principle is the equal right of all to hold office and determine public policy. This is, at first glance, a delightful arrangement; it becomes disastrous because people are not properly educated to select the best rulers and wisest courses. As to the people, they have no understanding, and only repeat what their rulers are pleased to tell them; to get a doctrine accepted or rejected it is only necessary to have it praised or ridiculed in a popular play... [m]ob-rule is a rough sea for the ship of state to ride; every wind of oratory stirs up the waters and deflects the course. The upshot of such a democracy is tyranny or autocracy; the crowd loves flattery, it is so "hungry for honey," that at last the wiliest and most unscrupulous flatterer, calling himself the "protector of the people" rises to supreme power."

— Will Durant (The Story of Philosophy)

Rise of Populism and Frightening Prospects of World War-3

Muhammad Mohtasim

After World War II, the world became bipolar, with the United States supporting liberal democracy and the USSR being the torch-bearer of communism. In their Cold War, both states were, in pursuit of power and alliances, investing in new democracies financially and diplomatically. The Cold War ended with the fall of Berlin Wall and that of the Soviet Union in 1991—victory of liberalism. But this was not the so-called 'end of history'; it was rather the beginning of a new chapter, which is also nearing collapse now.

The world was highly influenced by the very torchbearer of liberal democracy, i.e. the United States, which then manoeuvred everything to secure its own national interest—not serving the purpose of liberal democracy. Other fearful states, as says Samuel P. Huntington in 'The Clash of Civilizations', started admiring their own cultures and civilizations, promoting regionalism in the start of the 21st century and it was, ultimately, a step towards populism. Emergence of Asian Tigers as economic powers further strengthened the feeling. Later, following the depression of

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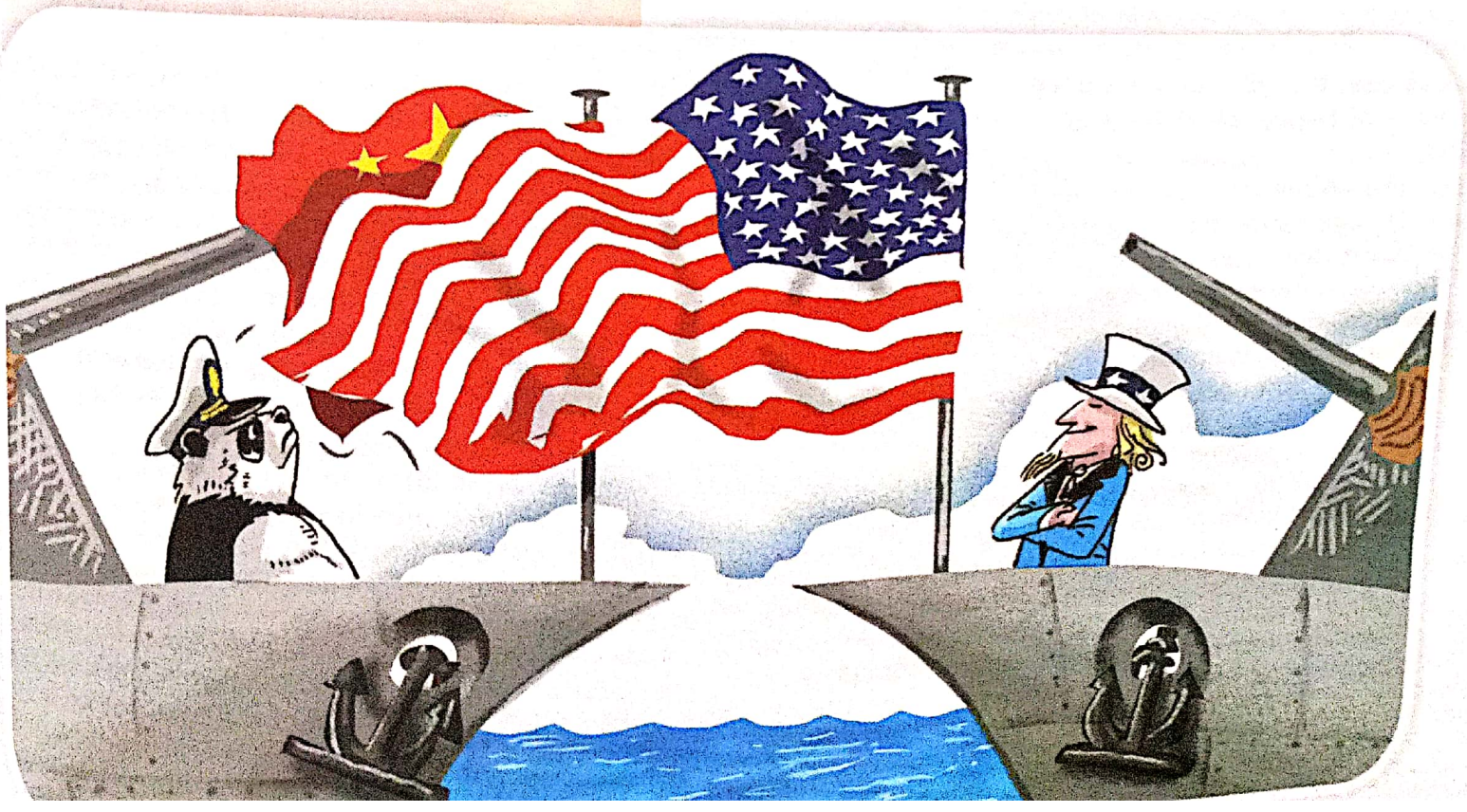

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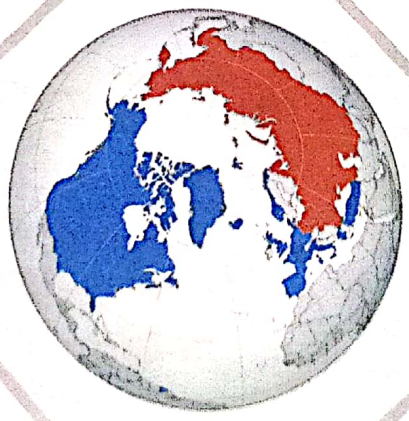
2008-09, the world became multi-polar—amplifying nationalism, a prospect of populism. Next was the migration crisis of 2015, the final nail in the coffin, which resulted in rise of populist leaders in different states like Modi in India and Trump in the United States. Now the populist acts like US withdrawal from treaties like JCPOA (a.k.a. Iran nuclear deal), China's wolf-warrior diplomacy and Erdogan's pursuit for power and revival of the Caliphate have upended the world order. Heaping more miseries, Covid-19 has created a mammoth health crisis across the world, leading almost all economies to depression. Such a situation has also promoted authoritarian tendencies in different states. States became protectionists—another step towards populism. The situation is now worsening day by day, leading potentially to a disaster from which the world may not recover ever.

Major fronts of the looming Ww3

Asia would be the major battleground this time. Starting with South Asia, the frosty relations between India and Pakistan, and their long-standing conflict on Kashmir is now driving both states to war, especially after illegal and unconstitutional amendment to the Indian constitution which stripped the illegally occupied valley of its special status, and the ensuing lockdown and grave human rights violations that are still rampant there. Then, Hindu nationalist movement against Muslims, through amending the Citizenship Act and snatching their right of citizenship, and also their mass killings and blames like 'corona-spreaders', is adding fire to fury. Peoples of both countries actually wish to conquer the opponent and form a single state under its own rule. Moreover, both the states are naturally involved in the ongoing US-China conflict; India being partner of USA and Pakistan aligned with China, as it cannot lose its biggest investor and an all-weather friend. So, there are chances that the region may be a proxy warfront also.

Next is the Middle East where the conflict between the pro-US Saudi Arabia and anti-US Iran and Shia-Sunni differences will be manipulated of by world powers—as it will help them plunder the region that is rich in natural resources. In 1969, when Al Aqsa Mosque was attacked by an arsonist—an extremist Australian Christian, Dennis Michael Rohan—all the Muslim countries got united to stop oil trade with Western countries, leaving them with no option but to bow before Arabs and fulfil their demands. From the Morocco meeting, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) emerged. Then, in Iranian revolution, Khomeini's anti-US policies, as evident from the Great Hostage of American diplomats in Iran for 444 days, were a threat to American hegemony in the region. And no power wants to lose hegemony in the Persian Gulf from where 84% of world's oil trade is carried out. USSR not left the opportunity to jump on the bandwagon with Iran. The United States, then, started development in Saudi Arabia in exchange for its oil as said by John Perkins in his famous 'Confessions of An Economic Hitman'. The United Kingdom also supported US in this task. Their policy of feeding the rulers and ruling the 'ruled ones' can be viewed in most of the world at that time. This is also the principal reason behind absence of democracy in most Arab states. So, the conflict intensified with the passage of time; especially, Shia-Sunni divide affected the whole Muslim Ummah. This can be witnessed in Iraq-Iran war, Yemen conflict, and so on. Saudi Arabia and Iran both roped in their supporters in Muslim world and the conflict increased due to formation of blocs. China, too, is investing in Iran under BRI which can, in the near future, become a war front for global powers.



In addition, the adventures of Israel in Palestine, since its recognition as a state by the UN, had been a matter of a great concern for the Muslim world. Series of Intifadas and UN resolutions against Israel's grave human rights breaches in Palestine couldn't stop Israeli aggressions. Israel blatantly violates territorial sovereignty of Palestine and UN's ban on the use of force, but all the resolutions moved against it in the UNSC are vetoed by USA—clearing Israel's way towards annexation of the whole Palestinian territory. Israel also remained in conflict with Syria and Jordan in pursuit of its

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vested interests in the region. USA uses Israel as a satellite in the Middle East and deems its military dominance in the region an imperative. Then, Iran-backed Hamas is working in Palestine and fighting against Israeli aggression. To counter this, Israel has recently signed an agreement with UAE to deploy its army, air force and warships there—a threat to whole region. Moreover, it is claimed that Israel also backed the attack in Beirut, Lebanon, that destroyed thousands of houses there with many casualties and injuries. So, the whole Middle East will be drained into war in case of any military adventure in the region.

Furthermore, major fronts in East Asia would be the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, involving proxies of both United States and China, as currently can be witnessed in Hong Kong where China has implemented its National Security Law; but US is opposing this move tooth and nail as a semi-independent Hong Kong is in its interest. But the US must keep in mind what Dr Henry Kissinger has said about Beijing's diplomatic prowess. He said, "Beijing's diplomacy is so subtle and indirect that it largely went over our heads in Washington." So, China has indirectly threatened the existence of USA because of its ever-growing dependence on Chinese products, leaving US to opt for such protectionist measures essential for its survival. So, the rift between these two powers may lead to a new cold war where both states seek alliances to maintain balance of power.

In Europe, Near-Eastern states generally remain involved in ethnicity-based civil wars. Other powers, then, seek to influence the 'gateway to Europe' in pursuit of power. At this time, disturbance in Belarus on presidential election has provided Russia with an opportunity to enter the region. Turkey's quest for power in the region and its aspiration to revive the Caliphate can be seen by its issues with Georgia and Greece in the Black Sea, involvement in Libya and Egypt and movement in the Mediterranean. But, Turkey may face the same fate as was faced by Mussolini's Italy in WWII; because it also lacked military and economic arm to bear the pressure of total war. In addition, Brexit has also disturbed the balance in European Union, leaving Germany with no competitor. Covid-19 has further added to the agony of other states. USA has called back its troops from Germany. France is now feeling threatened from nationalists emerging in Germany—seeking expansion. So, the war in Europe may arise on Franco-German belt, Mediterranean and Near East including Black Sea and the Balkans.

North African countries will obviously be the part of war because Turkey will try to get control over Suez Canal, bringing Egypt, France, Germany and the UK in direct conflict there. Libya has two governments; one recognised by UN and the other by Egypt, hence bringing it to war also. Tariq Bin Ziyad's Gibraltar will induce Ummah's propensity in Morocco to fight for Muslim cause.

Hence, it seems that the world is at the brink of a war-cum-disaster again, with new zeal, new ambitions and advanced modern technology. Reversal of the world again from liberalism towards realism is harnessing 'anarchy' in the world. It's the time for UN Security Council to play its role. It's the time for statesmen to think about seriousness of the situation—for the sake of humanity—and it's a wake-up call for humanity also, as this time, the war may leave no human who could enjoy the so-called fruits and plunder of war. In this nuclear age, a war will exterminate humans from the face of the earth. So, international institutions should work as saviours of humanity by applying democratic principles. International organisations should work independently by bringing reforms in their structures like ensuring equality of all states by removing 'vetoes'. Statesmen should also work to promote pluralistic norms and culture in their societies.

The writer is a student of law (final year) at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.

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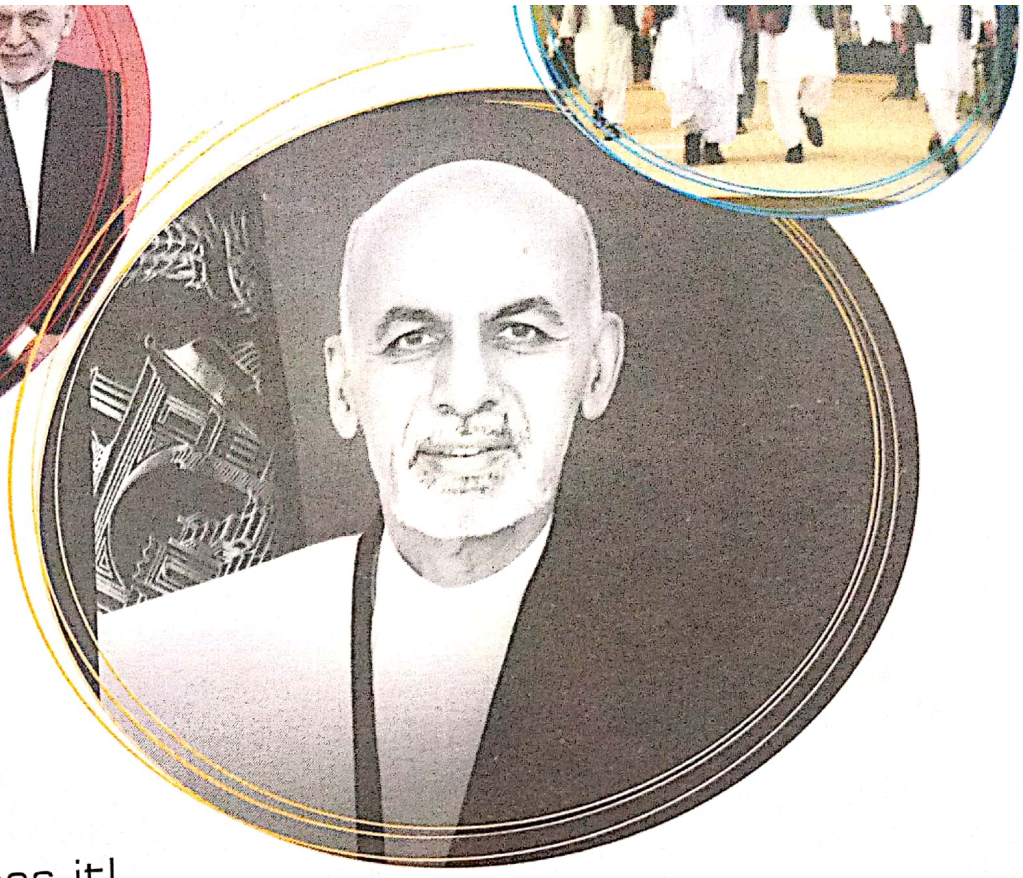

Afghan Peace Process

... as Afghan President sees it!

On August 13, President of Afghanistan, Dr Ashraf Ghani, during a virtual session with James B. Cunningham at the Council on Foreign Relations, shared his thoughts on various aspects of the ongoing peace process in Afghanistan. In this conversation, Dr Ghani elaborated the recent developments ranging from the decision of Loya Jirga to release Taliban prisoners and the role of regional countries, especially Pakistan, in kick-starting negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government to the future place of his country in this region. Following are some important excerpts from this lengthy conversation.

Magazine Desk

Loya Jirga's decision to release Taliban prisoners

A great tribute to the collective wisdom of the Afghan people, the Loya Jirga, our grand council, has resolved what legally could not be resolved. We released 4,600 prisoners from the Taliban list, and then an additional 500 people on our own conviction. But 400 posed serious constitutional and legal issues. But the moral basis that the Loya Jirga provided in a consensus of 3,400 Afghan men and women has given us an opportunity to break the last deadlock. And we hope that during this process, we'll be able to resolve the conflict politically. The key goal for the Afghan people is to bring an end to violence that has haunted us for 40 years. And we are preparing that one team is representing a national perspective. And in addition, the Loya Jirga has provided the framework regarding the values and key parameters, which enable us to talk to the Taliban.

Future of Negotiations with Taliban

The real question relates to the willingness, capability, and desire of the Taliban to truly embrace a political solution. During the negotiations, we are going to find out. The test is to be able to get a comprehensive ceasefire as soon as possible and to be able to talk about a political framework, which would bring the participation of the Taliban within Afghan society and politics.

Afghanistan is a society that has immense skills in conflict resolution. The test is going to be once we encounter and sit with each other. The other is the role of the region and the international community. What we have nationally is a very strong consensus and a political capital that has been generated by the will of the people in the Loya Jirga. We convened the Loya Jirga within four days. The Loya Jirga decided the central question in two days. That shows the Afghan society can assemble and express itself.

Second is that we have an agreement with the international community, particularly with the United States, on the end state of the talks—a sovereign, united and democratic Afghanistan that would be at peace with itself and the world. Until now, there's been a lot of pressure, requests from the Afghan government. Now, the balance shifts as we've taken all the risks because we are a state. We would not have been a party to agreement to release 5,000 Taliban unless out of the imperative of wanting peace in the conviction. We did it. Now we hope that all the actors will come together in the region again. We've built this consensus. It will show whether the desire for a stable

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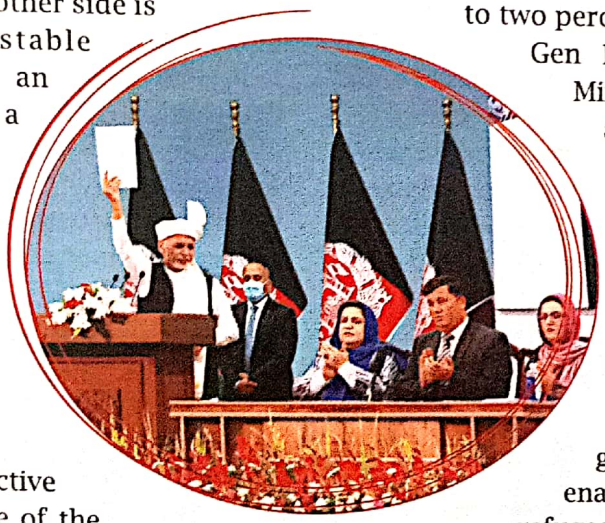
Afghanistan, that would be in everybody's interest, prevails over more short-term ideas and views, and whether the Taliban will now prove themselves capable of politics, and imaginative and constructive politics, or not. The question is open.

Role of Pakistan

The billion dollar question is regarding Pakistan, where again, with constructive discussions, the Chief of Army Staff, Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, came to Kabul. The key issue is how the region conceives its importance. We aspire to have a stabler Afghanistan and we've coined a new term, a multi-aligned Afghanistan. An unaligned Afghanistan is not possible but a multi-aligned Afghanistan is, we're friends. We have the greatest friends, a number of friends, and don't get involved in the disputes among our friends and neighbours and do not allow our territory to be used against any of them. This can be an anchor for stability. This possibility has been acknowledged. Equally, the other side is acknowledging that an unstable Afghanistan or, God forbid, an Afghanistan that is plunged into a vicious civil war or internal conflict, could do substantial harm to its neighbours. This balance is what we need, and the heart of the strategy and tactics is to be able to bring this balance. I think it's necessary to allow us to move forward.



Afghanistan and region's future

Our diplomacy has been constructive and effective. But, the future role of the United States in the region is, again, a conditioning, if not the determining, factor that affects both our relationships and the relationships of the neighbours with each other. On the positive side, there is an immense interest in regional connectivity, the agenda of regional connectivity. And, I'd like to thank Mr. Boehler, and the Development Finance Corporation has been very engaged in this process. There are huge projects for the first time. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline is being constructed in Afghanistan. The energy corridors and the transit corridors are really moving forward. There's also coordination now with Pakistan. They are a corridor with India, and we are now connected with 50 countries. This is one side of the equation. If you're seeing the great Asian transformation, where Asia is being changed from a notional geographic cultural construct to a literal economic continent, like the United States in the first three quarters of the 19th century, then Afghanistan's stability becomes very much a part of a larger agenda. On the other side are atavistic habits, notions of a lack of consensus on a Westphalian system, state responsibility in interference.

We are at that critical moment, we're doing our best. And then the other issue that is both one of unity and one of potential risk is the question of terrorists. We have, with you [Americans]—and we are very close, and that's why I pay tribute to the American heroes that have died for your security and our freedom—been dealing with a phenomenon that has not found a solution. What's the utility of force? What is the limit of force? And how do you bring a policy that can truly eliminate the danger of terrorism? This is not the first wave. This is the fifth wave in 150 years. Those questions are interrelated. So, on the positive side of the balance, there is an immense opportunity for cooperation. On the negative, the threats could bring us together, or may take time to converge again into a regional consensus on security.

Future political relationship with Pakistan

The fundamental question again is interest. A stable Afghanistan and an Afghanistan in peace could bring one to two percent of additional rate of growth first. Gen Bajwa thinks, like me, and Prime Minister Imran Khan, and they are aligned, for region, not countries. And, of course, India's rise and its prosperity is something that is extremely important for all of us. Pakistan needs to ask itself some main questions regarding its influence. One, does a Taliban brand government serve its interest? Second, what type of a government in Afghanistan would enable the return of two to four million refugees? That is a priority question. Three, what type of government would be able to undertake the very large projects of connectivity that could be beneficial? And, on the negative side, if events spin out of control in Afghanistan, what would be the cost to Pakistan? Pakistan is the country that would be most adversely affected by, God forbid, a downward trend in Afghanistan internally, given its priorities. And, as Prime Minister Khan and I both are focused on poverty eradication as our central challenge, how would we be able to bring a framework that can deal with this, given Corona, given the economic downturn, and others?

Today's Pakistan was an inherent part of a larger economic region with Central Asia and West Asia. Can it acquire that type of dynamism? And lastly, a stable Afghanistan, hopefully, will open the way for resolution of fundamental issues with India that would enable all of us in the region to benefit from what is clearly unintelligible and that is, because of political differences in perceptions, we are unable to utilize and put to the service of our people.

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Afaque Ahmed

Introduction

Gaza strip of Palestine continues to be bombed by Israel with impunity. And in the West Bank, its nefarious designs to annex the parts that form the Palestinian state continuously haunt the people belonging to the region. The move contravenes international law and United Nations resolutions; great hue and cry has, intermittently, been raised in many countries to hold Israel accountable for the havoc it has been wreaking on Palestine for decades, albeit with no fruitful results. Muslim world, though opposed to the annexation, is yet to be seen as to where it positions itself in the realms of the recognition of Israel as a sovereign state after the US-brokered UAE-Israel Abraham Accord for normalisation of bilateral relations.

Israel's annexation of Palestine and international law

In spite of scathing global criticism over the human rights abuses and violation of international law and UNSC and General Assembly resolutions, the long-serving Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, has been determined to exercise the Jewish sovereignty over the remaining parts of Palestine. But, international law is crystal clear that annexation—extending one state's sovereignty to a territory that belongs to another state and treating it as its own—by any means is illegal, and not allowed. Moreover, in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPTs), systematic settling of Israelis to displace the Palestinians amounts to war crimes. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention clearly states: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." It also prohibits "individual or mass forcible transfers as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory," which, however, is contravened predominantly by the Zionist state.

Is America behind the annexation move?

All that transpires in Palestine at the hands of Tel Aviv gives credence to the claim that Netanyahu has America's full support in his annexation plan. It would be a Gordian knot for him to go on with annexation of even an inch without US support. So, no doubt, everything proceeds in line with Israeli coordination with Trump administration. An Israeli cabinet minister Ofir Akunis recently said: "Coordination with the American administration is not something that can be dismissed." It is, therefore, clear that under the aegis of the US, breaching of international law and UN resolutions makes no difference to Israeli government.

America's backing of Israel in eating up the Palestinian territories is staggering, and singularly inappropriate. Trying to come up with the solution to end the

ISRAEL-PALESTINE QUESTION AND THE MUSLIM WORLD

Is the Abraham Accord a new ploy to divide the Muslims?

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longstanding feud between both the states, President Donald Trump, in the end of January this year, released his much-touted 'Middle East Peace Plan' which was quite ridiculous, as it was heavily in favour of Israel, and thereby was turned down immediately by Palestinian government. President Trump's support to Israeli expansion plans implies repudiation of the Palestinian right to self-determination and underscores the fact that US response to violators of international law differs from country to country. In the case of Russia's intervention in Ukraine, the US imposed heaps of economic sanctions on the communist state. Contrary to that, on the same grounds, Israel that should have been dealt with an iron hand has enjoyed US support. It is, indeed, the biggest diplomatic blunder on the part of the US that it has given carte blanche to Israel to the extent that the latter has ruined the Gaza strip with incessant aerial bombings.

Where stands the Muslim world?

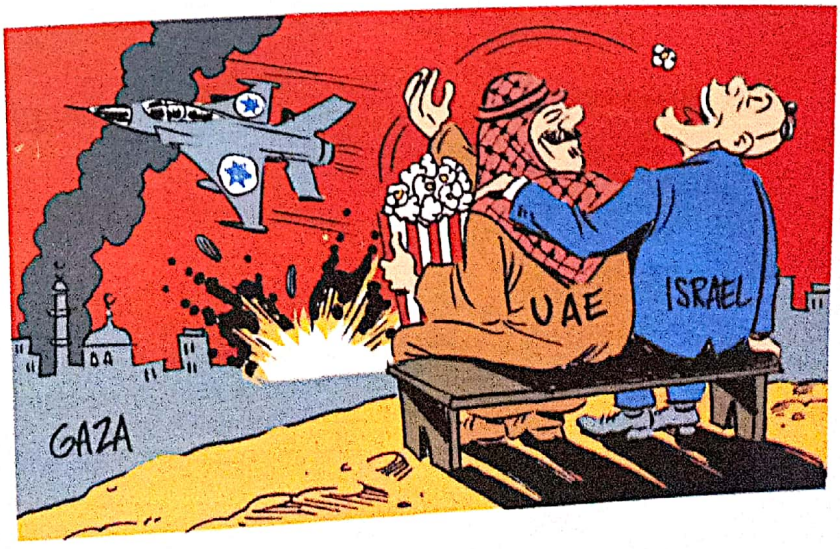
The Abraham Accord between the UAE and Israel is a huge development in the international milieu. UAE is the third Arab country, after Egypt and Jordan, to establish diplomatic relations with the Jewish state, through this deal. Although the said accord didn't come as a surprise—both countries have been involved in secret talks to tie diplomatic knot for years—yet it has dealt a heavy blow to the Muslim states since they had agreed to not recognize Israel unless Palestine is restored to its actual position. Straightforwardly, Iran has termed the deal a 'stab in the back' of the Palestinians just in return of petty economic benefits.

The deal is aimed to bring about peace and tranquillity in the region, as the Zionist government has affirmed its commitment to halt the annexation of the occupied West Bank and Jordan Valley. However, it may have serious consequences for the Palestinian state and is a grave threat to the fraternity of the Muslim world, as many other Muslim states are expected to follow UAE in establishing relations with Israel. Experts believe that Saudi Arabia can soon join the UAE in recognising Israel as it wants to give tough time to a common foe in the region, that is, Iran. Pressed already by the US economic sanctions, Iran might find itself in hot waters as it has a long history of deteriorating relations with UAE. With Israel now able to operate businesses in the UAE, next to Iran, it is highly likely UAE-Iran relations will deteriorate in future. In this regard, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has already warned the UAE "against opening the path of Israel to the region," saying that its attitude towards Abu Dhabi would take a turn for the bitter.

While other developing Muslim states might think of recognising Israel, as it has been technologically advanced and can prove to be beneficial for them, Pakistan's position of not recognizing the Jewish state is quite clear. Prime Minister Imran Khan has categorically dismissed the possibility of following suit after Israel-UAE deal, saying: "Pakistan will never recognize Israel until Palestinians are given their right of a just settlement."

Conclusion

It is quite disturbing a fact that large swathes of land, erstwhile belonging to Palestine, have so far been annexed by Israel and the parts that come under the rule of Palestine have been under heavy Israeli military control. Under the US aegis, the Jewish state has launched airstrikes that have turned Palestine into a living hell for the Palestinians. It also depicts the pathetic state of affairs and worst humanitarian crisis in the world. International community including the United States must stop Tel Aviv from inflicting more destruction on the Muslim state, by imposing painful economic sanctions on it so that it could show some humanity towards the entire Palestine, particularly the Gaza strip.



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Winners and Losers of the Pandemic Economy

Michael Spence

Much economic commentary nowadays focuses on "divergence": while broad equity-market indices are at, or near, all-time highs, much of the wider economy struggles to recover from one of the most severe downturns ever. Whereas the Russell 2000 is still down 5.4% year to date, the S&P 500 and the Russell 3000 have fully recovered to their pre-pandemic levels, and the Nasdaq, which tilts toward digital and technology companies, is up some 26%.

Many have concluded that the market is unmoored from economic reality. But, viewed another way, today's equity markets may be partly reflecting powerful underlying trends amplified by the "pandemic economy."

Equity prices and market indices are measures of value creation for the owners of capital, which is not the same thing as value creation in the economy more broadly, where labour and tangible and intangible capital all play a role. Moreover, markets reflect the future expected real returns to capital. When it comes to measuring the present value of labour income, there simply is no comparable forward-looking index. In principal, then, if there is a significant anticipated economic rebound, the outlooks for capital and labour income could be similar, but only capital's expected future would be reflected in the present.

> While it is true that bullish equity markets are out of step with the historic contraction in the real economy, to say that they are disconnected from it misses the point. In fact, the lofty valuations of companies with high intangible capital per employee make perfect sense in today's economy.

But there is more to the story. Market valuations are increasingly based on intangible assets, not least the ownership and control of data, which confers its own means of value creation and monetization. According to one recent study of the S&P 500, stocks in companies with high levels of intangible capital per employee have recorded the biggest gains this year, and the less intangible capital per employee companies have, the worse their stocks have performed.

In other words, incremental value creation in markets and employment are diverging. And while this was true even before the pandemic, the trend has now accelerated. There are at least two reasons for this. One is the rapid adoption of digital technologies as part of the response to lockdown measures. The second is that many labour-intensive sectors (which normally add value mainly with labour and tangible capital) have been partly or totally shut down as a result of lockdowns, social distancing and consumer risk aversion.

For example, the Dow Jones US Airline Index clearly took a large hit and has yet to recover. In normal times, this sector generates value mainly with tangible capital, labour and fuel (though there are significant digital elements to its business, too).

To be sure, general market valuations have been supported by the US Federal Reserve and other major central banks' interest-rate policies. In the current context, highly accommodative monetary policies are principally aimed at creating space for governments to use debt to finance large fiscal programs in response to the Covid-19 shock.

But while ultra-low interest rates may provide some general support for today's market valuations, they do not account for the stark differences across sectors. After all,

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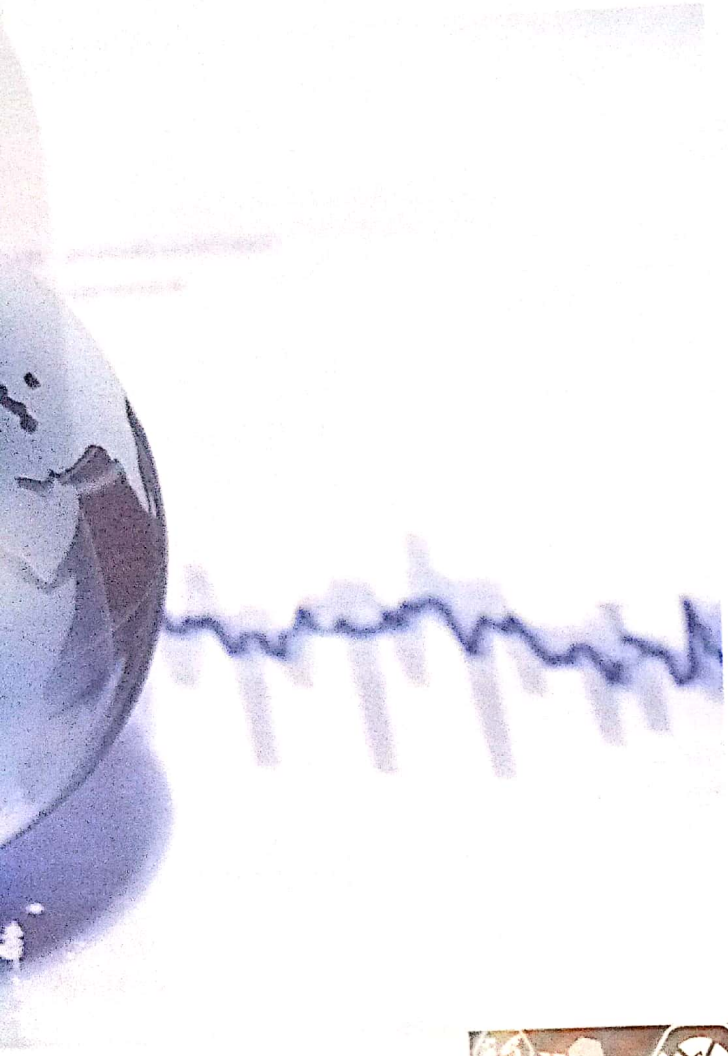
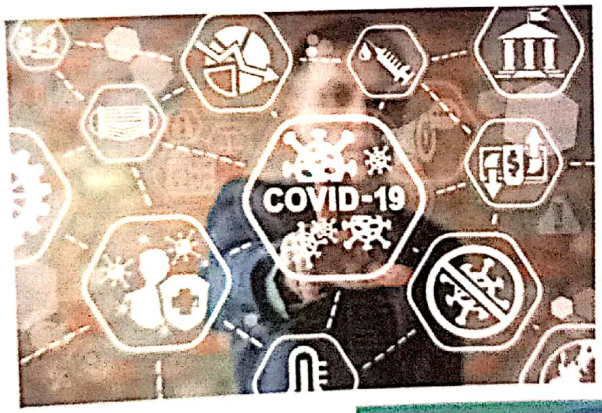


the part of the economy not represented by publicly traded stocks is also suffering (though there are, of course, private companies in digital sectors whose valuations and returns are similar to, or even higher than, the upper end of the intangible-capital spectrum in public markets).



More broadly, lower-income households and many small businesses with thin, fragile balance sheets have been left with no effective shock absorbers, and many of the labour-intensive sectors that generate significant employment in normal times (including hotels, restaurants and bars) have been partly shut down. To address these trends, sovereign balance sheets are being used as a shock absorber for large swaths of the economy.

But not all swaths. Because the current crisis is actually boosting the value of certain companies, it is worth asking who owns the bulk of their stock. It certainly isn't the private households and businesses whose balance sheets are too weak to serve as shock absorbers. Today's high-valuation companies are owned by individuals and institutions with balance sheets that are already substantial enough to provide a cushion of economic resilience.

When the post-pandemic phase comes into view, labour-intensive sectors with lower intangible capital per employee may enjoy a period of outperformance as they bounce back. Yet even in this scenario, the economy's digital footprint is likely to expand, and the underlying trend favouring intangible capital and its owners will continue.

It is not surprising that intangible-capital-intensive sectors would have an advantage. For the most part, their cost structures are abnormally tilted toward fixed costs and low or negligible marginal costs. This makes some platforms massively scalable, which, in turn, confers significant power in terms of pricing and market access.

One could draw a few conclusions from these economic realities. For starters, the pandemic economy has accelerated the pre-pandemic trend favouring intangible-asset value creation through firms with relatively fewer employees. We can expect this trend to continue, albeit not at the heightened pandemic-induced pace. Traditional businesses will recover, but the disconnect between value creation across firms depending on intangibles per employee will persist and remain a major economic and social challenge.

The idea that markets and the economy are diverging reflects a narrow focus on particular indices. But no single index can offer a useful summary of overall market, let alone economic, conditions and trends. And in the pandemic economy, equity-market indices obscure even more than they otherwise would, owing to the large divergences in economic outcomes across sectors and for the people who work in them.

Finally, given the outsize contribution of digital intangible assets to value creation, it is hard to see a way to reverse the trend of rising wealth inequality.

Because the balance sheets of those lower down the income and wealth ladder are largely devoid of assets with high intangible and digital content, the rewards of current economic and technological dynamics will pass them by. ■

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INDIA-CHINA GEOPOLITICAL CONTEST

Risking the Strategic Stability of Indian Ocean Region

Mustansar Hussain Tasir

For readers' ease, the concept of strategic stability must be explained first for a clear understanding of this dynamic phenomenon. Though the term is frequently used in strategic studies and international relations, it is a loosely-defined notion as it has no single agreed-upon or universally-accepted definition. Due to the varied interpretations, there are also no defined parameters to measure it. Factually, in the multipolar nuclear world, the rapid transformations in military technology and accordingly the shifts in strategic domain lead to a new way of thinking about the causes of war and the requirements of peace and security.

The term 'strategic stability' is many a time used totally out of context due to which its misplaced use creates confusion and further misperceptions. For instance, a US Department of Defense 2010 report titled as 'Nuclear Posture Review Report (2010)' used terms like 'stable', 'stability' and 'instability' more than 70 times. But a cautious study of the Report testifies that, in large part, the term has been used unsuitably. What is this concept and how it needs to be employed in the discourse is being mentioned in the following paragraphs.

Edward Warner, once the representative of US Secretary of Defense who also represented the country in the New START talks, posited that the concept "strategic stability" can be employed in three ways:

a. Most narrowly, strategic stability describes the absence of incentives to use nuclear weapons first (crisis stability) and to build up a nuclear force (arms race stability);

b. More broadly, it is the absence of armed conflict between nuclear-armed states; and

c. Most broadly, it depicts a regional or global security environment wherein states enjoy peaceful and harmonious relations.

Keeping these three aspects in view in the context of China-India competition in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), a pertinent question arises: are there any chances or incentives of conflict in the IOR for any of the two nations? The answer must be in negative as the stakes are so high that these nuclear-armed countries cannot afford any adventure. Can the IOR be a battlefield for the next India-China war? Dr Walter C. Ladwig III, a senior maritime analyst and expert on War Studies responded in detail to one of my questions. I asked, "If there were to be a collision between India and China in the future, would Indian Ocean be the most likely location? Dr Ladwig responded, "I'm not saying that this outcome is likely, but rather that it's hard to envision another region in which it would be more likely. Despite the Act East policy, India does not have significant interests east of Malacca that would impact up on China's declared 'core interests' such as its territorial disputes with Japan and the future of Taiwan. The converse is not true. China has already been willing to involve itself in construction projects in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir as well as increase its economic ties with the small South Asian states on India's periphery that constitute its natural sphere of influence. Thus, the IOR would appear to be the most likely location for a clash of key interest between India and China rather than some other region of the world."

Dr Ladwig's prophecy is expressive of the fact that though the stakes of India and China in the region are high, being the followers of Offensive-Realist paradigm, they may not be willing to scale down their militarization in the IOR to secure their regions of influence. As the region is already a nuclear flashpoint due to hostilities and wars, the competition between the major powers may further push it toward strategic instability. Fast procurement and development of strategic assets, widening trust gaps due to suspicion about

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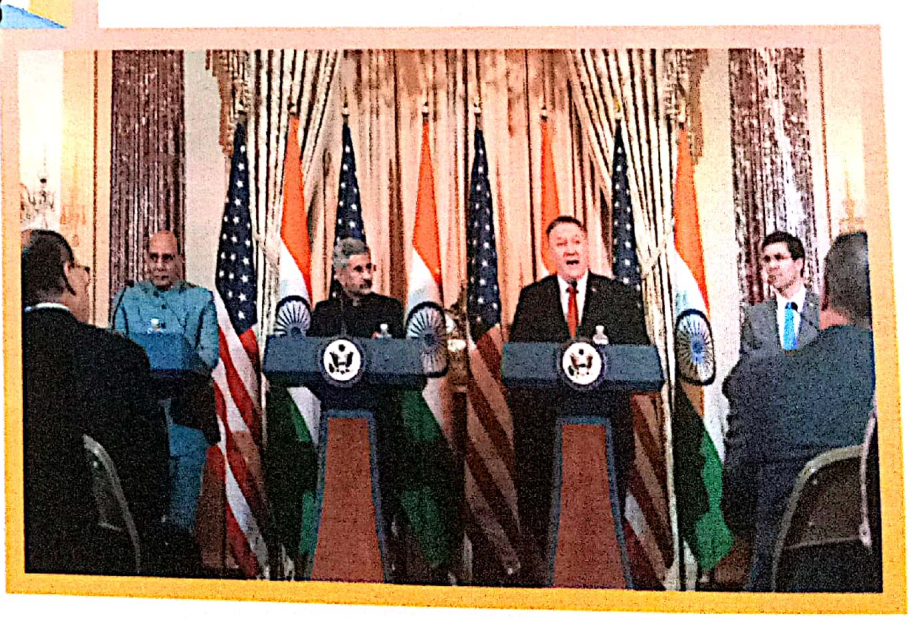
the other's actions and security dilemma leading to arms race indicate that regional stability is at higher risk.

Induction of strategic weapons, quest for nuclear triads, introduction of ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems, space programmes and other major steps such as rapid doctrinal improvisation, e.g. Cold Start and the likes, give clear indication that India is hell bent on disrupting the regional balance of power as it finds incentives in the use of force against Pakistan or China. However, as the history suggests that Indian military regularly commits blunders in development and execution of its strategy, any mistake or miscalculation in the nuclear context may prove extreme madness as, in such a case, the lives of tens of millions of people will be at risk.

However, massive presence of the US, Indian and Chinese militaries and even their nuclear submarines fails the idea. The IOR may never become a zone of peace or a nuclear weapon-free zone due to the divergent interests



and ambitions of the great powers. Being another major stakeholder in the region and having serious security threats from India, Pakistan has made relentless efforts to declare the Indian Ocean a nuclear weapon-free zone. Pakistan is among the countries most concerned on India's aggressive weaponization of the IOR.

Massive Militarization/Nuclearization of IOR

Since last few decades, the IOR has been dangerously militarized, especially with nuclear weapons, as the three major regional stakeholders in the IOR are declared nuclear states. This trend is exacerbating the already uncertain strategic environment of the whole region. In this regard, Admiral Dr Jayanath Colombage, an ex-chief of the Sri Lankan Navy, and an expert in the maritime security affairs, explains the current security and strategic environment of IOR and South Asia with three features:

(1) Strategic competition;
(2) Strategic alliances; and
(3) Strategic dilemma.

Colombage notes that besides the intense and worrisome competition going on, there are some groupings or strategic alliances as well. These alliances are to intensify the competition rather than to mitigate that. These strategic coalitions, he believes, are a major source of strategic dilemma for the weaker and less powerful nations. As the weaker nations cannot possess these assets, they have to take sides for their security.

To fortify their strategic position and to gain an upper hand, massive militarization of the IOR at an alarming pace is the greatest threat to regional peace. Militarization, especially the deployment of nuclear submarines, has raised concerns about the future security of the IOR. As discussed above, both India and China are modernizing and deploying their militaries in the IOR. In November 2018, INS Arihant, Indian navy's first indigenous nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine successfully completed its maiden deterrence patrol. This development had clear destabilizing impact for the region. After India completed its 'nuclear triad' by integrating Arihant into its arsenal, it literally disrupted the strategic balance of IOR as Prime Minister Modi openly dared those "who indulge in nuclear blackmail" in the Indian Ocean.

On one hand, such steps are a part of India's effort to counter China's military presence in the region as Chinese warships and submarines have been giving sleepless nights in New Delhi for quite some years. Brigadier (R)

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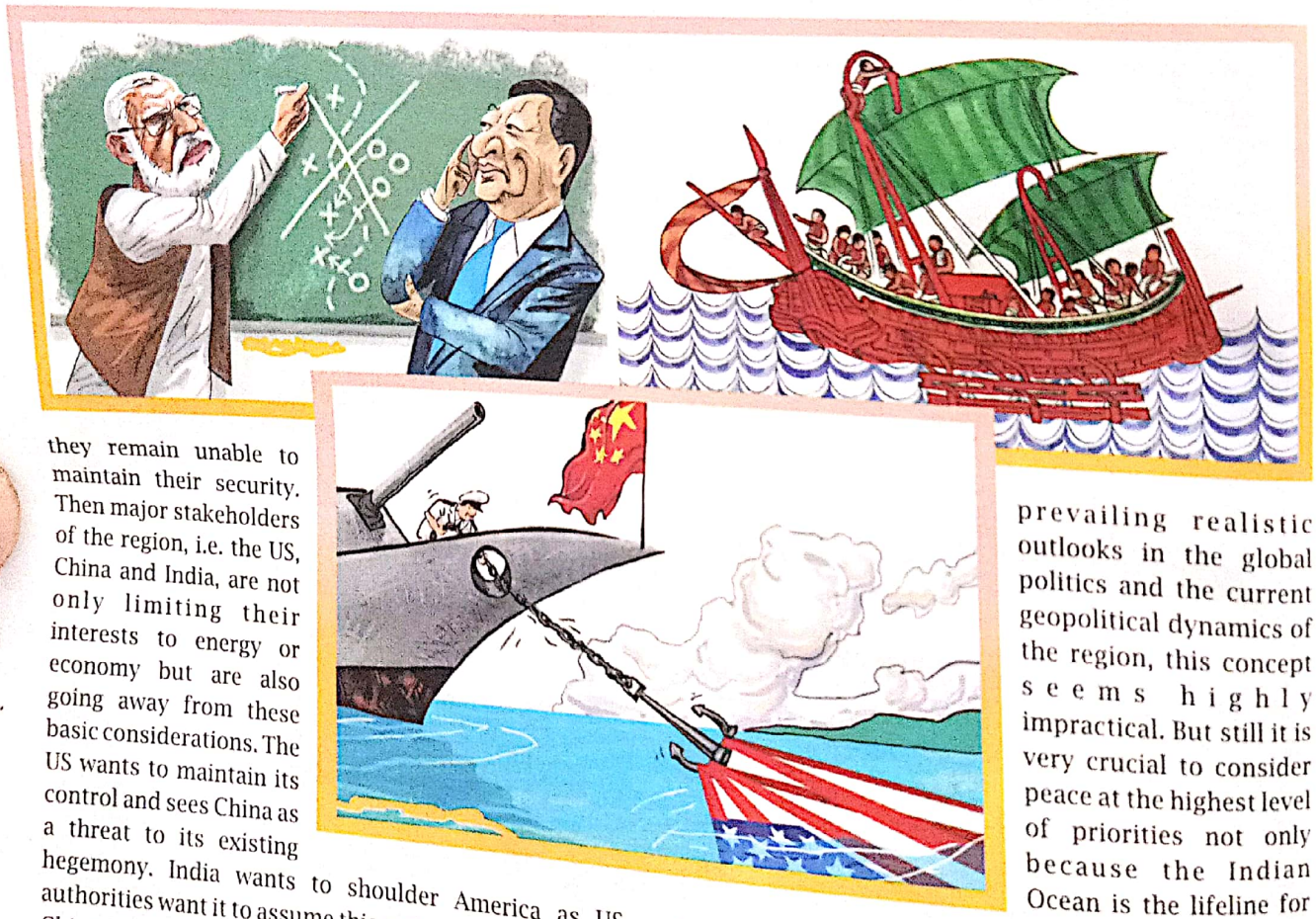
Gurmeet Kanwal posits that China's military assertiveness in the East and South China Seas has sown the seeds of doubt about China's long-term intentions and that PLA Navy's rapid expansion and modernisation must be seen as a grave potential threat.

The damaging impact of the nuclearized IOR could be beyond any stretch of imagination. But the great powers are militarizing the IOR without foreseeing the irreversible consequences. The US already has heavy military presence in the IOR while China and India are following the suit. In the changing geopolitical environment and due to shifting of nations' focus towards sea, the future interests of smaller countries will be in real jeopardy, if they remain unable to maintain their security. Then major stakeholders of the region, i.e. the US, China and India, are not only limiting their interests to energy or economy but are also going away from these basic considerations. The US wants to maintain its control and sees China as a threat to its existing hegemony. India wants to shoulder America as US authorities want it to assume this regional responsibility. China aspires to secure its Lines of Communication in Indo-Pacific to keep its economic growth intact by meeting its rapidly increasing energy needs. In their respective quests, they are all militarizing the IOR. But they must observe restraint as their scramble for interests and the resultant militarization and nuclearization in this hostile and conflict-ridden region may have horrific repercussions.

Here rises another important question: How possibly this dilemma might be confronted?

On 16 December 1971, complying on the initiative taken by Sri Lanka, as many as 61 countries voted in the UN General Assembly to declare Indian Ocean a 'Zone of Peace'. Furthermore, again the UNGA with 95-0 majority passed a resolution on December 15, 1972, to consolidate the peace initiative taken earlier. The initiative was further reinforced by formation of a committee to assess its impact and also to make the declaration practical. The objective behind was to avoid confrontation in the Indian Ocean and to promote regional integration for economic interdependence. Another aim was to keep the regional countries united so as to stop any militarization and adventurism from any extra-regional country.

To conclude, though Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace was indeed a great concept of that time, keeping in view the prevailing realistic outlooks in the global politics and the current geopolitical dynamics of the region, this concept seems highly impractical. But still it is very crucial to consider peace at the highest level of priorities not only because the Indian Ocean is the lifeline for world's most populous countries, but also because the two regional arch-rivals possess strategic weapons. China's economic and connectivity initiatives are open for all to witness and they must not be politicized for the sake of some relative gains. The regional players must amass the massive anticipated benefits offered by the China's economic vision. So, the foremost priority of the great powers should be to maintain strategic stability in the region as any adventurous strategic gambling in the IOR will not, at all, be affordable for any of the stakeholders in the region and beyond.



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Sino-US Relations

How to get back on track?

Zohaib Hassan

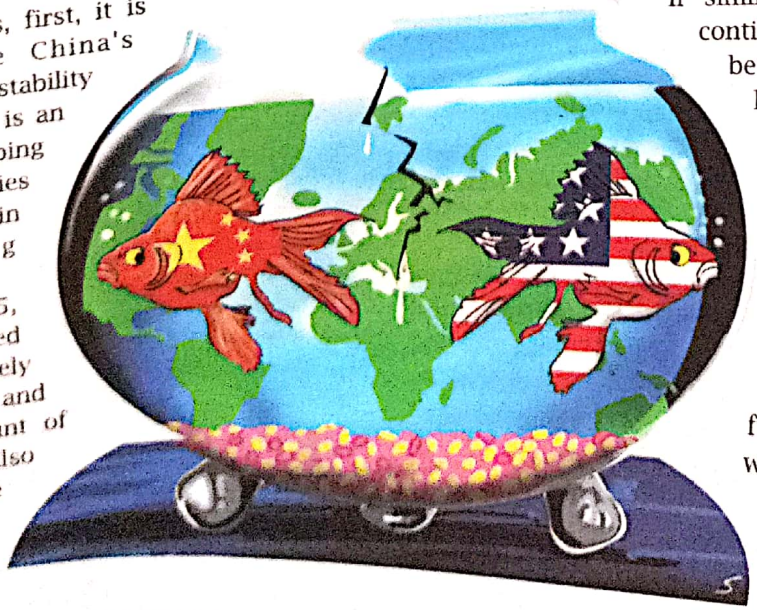
As the largest developing and developed countries, China and the United States play important roles in international affairs. The conflict between the two countries affects not only the interests of both China and the United States but also the overall situation of world peace and stability.

It is not difficult to understand that due to differences in the systems, histories and cultures of the two countries, some differences and contradictions will appear in the process of cooperation. However, history and reality tell us that China and the United States are dependent on each other, and their interests are intertwined. Cooperation will benefit both, and struggle will hurt both. So, amidst the Covid-19 hullabaloo, how can China-US relations get back on track?

For China, it is important to strive to promote dialogue, communication, exchanges and cooperation with the United States and other countries on pandemic prevention; unswervingly expand opening up in various fields with an open and inclusive attitude toward cooperation between the two countries, while respecting the US state and social system. China should also seek common ground while reserving differences, and pursue cooperation and win-win results.

The relations between the United States and China have deteriorated quickly, especially after Covid-19. Faced with the "dual pressure" of the worsening pandemic and re-election, the Trump administration has targeted China to divert people's attention, hyping up the "China threat" theory and provoking conflicts on multiple fronts.

As for the United States, first, it is necessary to realize China's significance to its own stability and development. China is an important force in helping the US tide over difficulties and a right-hand man in jointly solving international problems. For example, in 2005, China assisted the United States, which was severely hit by hurricane Katrina, and provided a large amount of aid. This year, China also provided it with a large amount of anti-pandemic materials, such as masks and protective suits. China also actively shared relevant data, which Trump personally admitted was effective in helping the US prevent the pandemic.



China and the United States have also jointly solved a series of public health and international climate issues. For example, in 2014, both countries jointly helped combat the Ebola epidemic in Africa. The two countries also issued three joint climate change statements, which promoted the successful signing of the Paris Agreement, etc. It is hoped that both countries cooperate to help the world emerge from the haze of the Covid-19 pandemic as soon as possible.

Second, the US should treat its relationship with China objectively, which helps the US maintain its image as a major power. The US's comprehensive strength ranks first in the world and plays an irreplaceable role in international affairs. However, if it continues to pursue a policy of 'diplomatic isolation' against China, it will destroy not only the Sino-US friendship but also the US's reputation as a powerful country.

The third is to build a sound China-US community which is conducive to healthy development of the US and the world economy. If the US continues to impose sanctions on Chinese companies, it will eventually hurt itself. Trump's recent decision to ban TikTok has only sparked a backlash among young people in its own country.

If similar commercial suppression continues, China's investment will be withdrawn from the US in large numbers and transferred to Europe and other regions.

The future Sino-US relationship should be a relationship where cooperation and competition coexist. Only by rationally handling future Sino-US relations can we achieve peaceful development between the two countries.

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Afghanistan is notably a hard country to control. Nations after nations and empires after empires have failed to rule Afghanistan. That's why it is often called the 'graveyard of empires'. It is the irony of history that after the exit of Soviet Union, the United States and its allies are also withdrawing their forces from the country after fighting an unsuccessful war for almost two decades.

QUEST FOR PEACE in Afghanistan

Mehboob Hussain Babar

Afghanistan is notoriously difficult to conquer, primarily due to three factors. First, it is situated at the crossroads of South Asia, East Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. It has been invaded many times and is settled by a plethora of tribes, many mutually antagonistic and hostile to each other and outsiders. Second, due to the frequency of invasion and the prevalence of tribalism, lawlessness here led to a situation where almost every village or house was built like a fortress. Third, its difficult terrain and landscape render it hard to conquer. Including the Hindu Kush mountain range, which runs through the centre and south of the country, and the Pamir Mountains in the east, Afghanistan is dominated by a number of jagged mountains. With little understanding of its land, the United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001, after the 9/11 incident. Approximately, 3500 American and allied troops have been killed in this war that has cost almost $800 billion in finances as well.

The Peace Deal

After months of negotiations, the United States and the Afghan Taliban signed a peace deal in Doha, Qatar, on February 29, 2020, to bring an end to the long war in Afghanistan. Both sides have long wrangled over the US demand for a ceasefire before the signing of the agreement, which had following main points:

- A timeline of 14 months for the withdrawal of all US and Nato troops from Afghanistan;
- Taliban guarantee that Afghan soil will not be used for terrorism that would intimidate the security of the US and its allies;
- the commencement of intra-Afghan talks;
- release of 5000 Taliban prisoners;
- lifting of UN and US sanctions against the Taliban; and
- a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.

US-Taliban deal is premised on many assumptions that make its success problematic. The implicitly that Taliban will not let anyone to use the Afghan soil for terrorism against the United States and its allies indicates that the US has acknowledged the Taliban as a principal stakeholder in Afghan government—it changes Taliban's status from one of the groups in the future Afghanistan government to the dominant actor. In this way, the deal relegates the Afghan government to a lower level vis-à-vis the Taliban which can make intra-Afghan negotiations very knotty and complicated, and can weigh the negotiations in the favour of Taliban.

The Intra-Afghan Talks

After 19 long years of wait, the Afghans have finally engaged in peace talks that could possibly end the two-decade-long war in which tens of thousands of causalities of civilians occurred and millions were displaced. On 12 September 2020, representatives of the Afghan government and the Taliban met in Doha, Qatar, amid hopes that the two sides will eventually agree to form a power-sharing government. The inaugural ceremony was attended by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Chairman Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah

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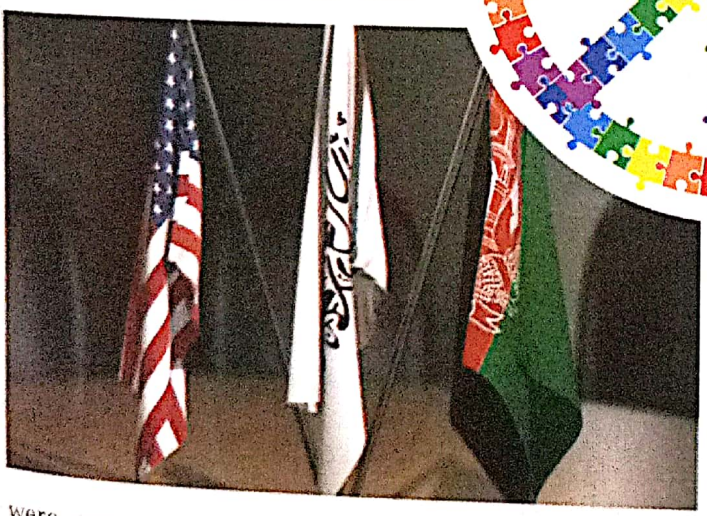
Abdullah, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and senior diplomats of a number of countries, in addition to the Afghan government and Taliban delegations. Besides this, 17 foreign ministers of different countries and heads of inter-governmental bodies virtually attended the session. The paramount agenda on the table is a way to enforce a ceasefire. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo termed the talks a "truly momentous" breakthrough, while the head of Afghanistan's Peace Council, Abdullah Abdullah, called it an "exceptional opportunity for peace".

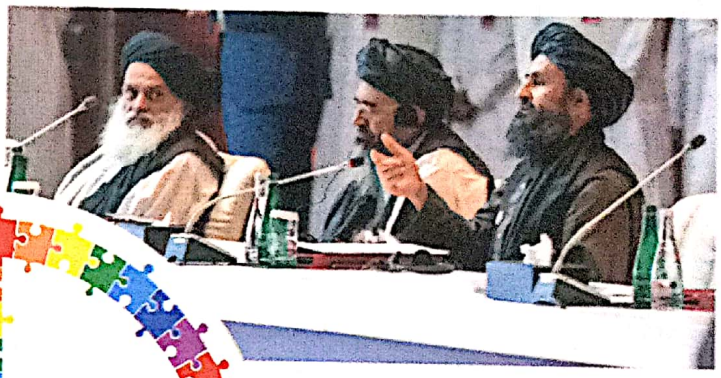
Despite the fact that Taliban are negotiating on an Islamic governance system—the demand may also be acceptable to Afghan government—whether Kabul will seek assurances from the Taliban on matters such as women and minority rights and press freedoms is yet to be seen. These are the liberties which many Afghans value and resisted the Taliban for. Additionally, there is also uncertainty over constitutional changes and the future government setup which can accommodate the Taliban—they have so far refused to participate in any democratic process, but rather have desired to establish an Islamic system in Afghanistan as was the case during the Taliban rule (1996-2001). At that time, women were not allowed to do jobs and men



were compelled to wear beards. Furthermore, how 'complete ceasefire' issue will be dealt under the intra-Afghan talks is another thorny issue as the attacks have been reported in more than a dozen provinces while delegates were negotiating in Doha.

Implications for Pakistan

It is an irrefutable fact of the regional history that unrest or violence in Afghanistan always affects Pakistan, directly or indirectly. This is in the common interest of both Pakistan and Afghanistan to restore peace and bring stability in the region. The US-led Nato occupation led to negative security implications for Pakistan from which it is still suffering. If the US withdraws from Afghanistan after facilitating a rapprochement between the Afghan government and the Taliban, it is highly likely that peace would prevail not only in Afghanistan but also in the whole region. However, if the US withdraws without succeeding to achieve a rapprochement, the clouds of civil wars will keep hovering over the region. If the civil war originates in Afghanistan, there would possibly be another influx of refugees which will be an unbearable burden on the dwindling economy of Pakistan, and law and order situation here would be worse. President Trump seems in a hurry and wants to withdraw US forces at the



earliest possible date. But, it will have multiple implications on Pakistan as highlighted above. As stated by Barry Buzan, the security of nations situated inside a specific geographical region is attached with one another and any weakness inside one specific nation can spread to different nations of a specific security complex. In this state of affairs, Pakistan should exert pressure on the United States and its allies to make intra-Afghan talks successful by supporting the Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process.

Conclusion

If the US and allies exit from Afghanistan like the Soviet Union did during the Cold War, the after-effects would be drastic not only for Afghanistan but also for Pakistan and the whole region. Thus, keeping in view the interests of Afghan people who have been suffering from this prolonged war, the US must take calculated measures seeking peace in the country and beyond. Last but not least, if intra-Afghan negotiations succeed, the US and its Nato allies should launch 'Afghanistan Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program' for the social integration of refugees and the Afghan people who suffered a lot in this destructive war. Also, there should be 'economic plans' for the revival of Afghan economy which got badly damaged in this "war of terror". ■

The author is a member of staff.

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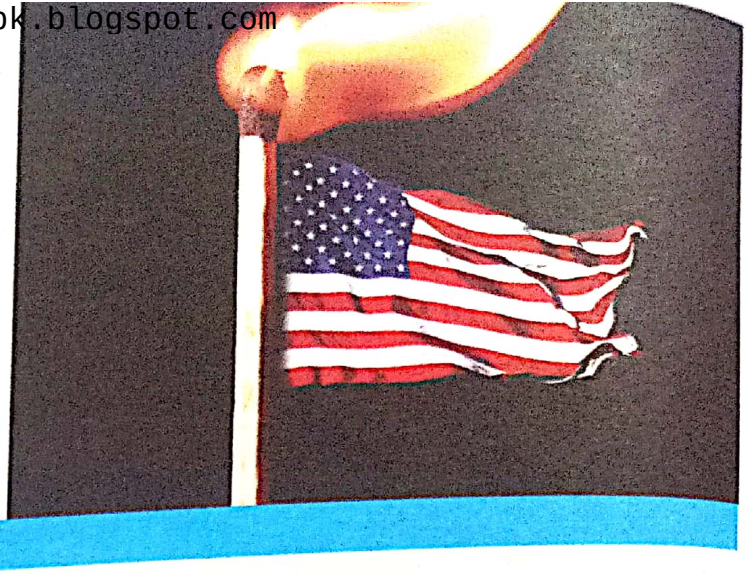
The Rise of American Democracy

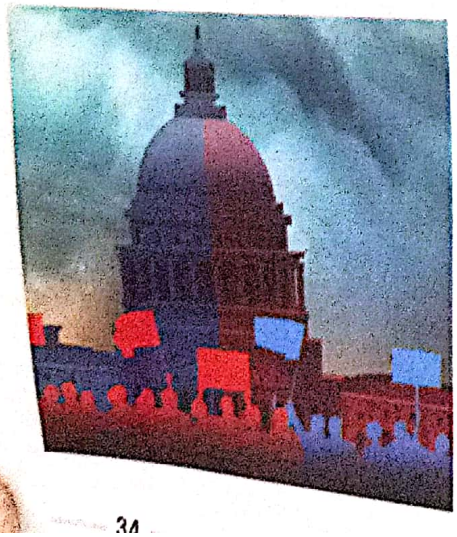


Durdana Anjum

A turning point in American political history occurred in 1828, which witnessed the election of Andrew Jackson over the incumbent Johh Quincy Adams. While democratic practices had been in ascendance since 1800, the year also saw the further unfolding of a democratic spirit in the United States. Supporters of Jackson called themselves Democrats or the Democracy, giving birth to the Democratic Party. Political authority appeared to rest with the majority as never before.

During the 1800s, democratic reforms made steady progress with the abolition of property qualifications for voting and the birth of new forms of political party organization. The 1828 campaign pushed new democratic practices even further and highlighted the difference between the Jacksonian expanded electorate and the older, exclusive Adams style. A slogan of the day, "Adams who can write/Jackson who can fight," captured the contrast between Adams the aristocrat and Jackson the frontiersman.

The 1828 campaign differed significantly from earlier presidential contests because of the party organization that promoted Andrew Jackson. Jackson and his supporters reminded voters of the "corrupt bargain" of 1824. They framed it as the work of a small group of political elites deciding who would lead the nation, acting in a self-serving manner and ignoring the will of the majority. From Nashville, Tennessee, the Jackson campaign organized supporters around the nation through editorials in partisan newspapers and other publications. Pro-Jackson newspapers heralded the "hero of New Orleans" while denouncing Adams. Though he did not wage an election campaign filled with public appearances, Jackson did give one major campaign speech in New Orleans on January 8, the anniversary of the defeat of the British in 1815. He also engaged in rounds of discussion with politicians who came to his home, the Hermitage, in Nashville.



The bitter rivalry between Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay was exacerbated by the "corrupt bargain" of 1824, which Jackson made much of during his successful presidential campaign in 1828. The drawing given below, published in the 1830s during the debates over the future of the Second Bank of the United States, shows Clay sewing up Jackson's mouth while the "cure for calumny [slander]" protrudes from his pocket. At the local level, Jackson's supporters worked to bring in as many new voters as possible. Rallies, parades and other rituals further broadcast the message that Jackson stood for the common man against the corrupt elite backing Adams and Clay. Democratic organizations called Hickory Clubs, a tribute to Jackson's nickname, Old Hickory, also worked tirelessly to ensure his election.

In November 1828, Jackson won an overwhelming victory over Adams, capturing 56 percent of the popular vote and 68 percent of the electoral vote. As in 1800, when Jefferson had won over the Federalist incumbent John Adams, the presidency passed to a new political party, the Democrats. The election was the climax of several decades of expanding democracy in the United States and the end of the older politics of deference.

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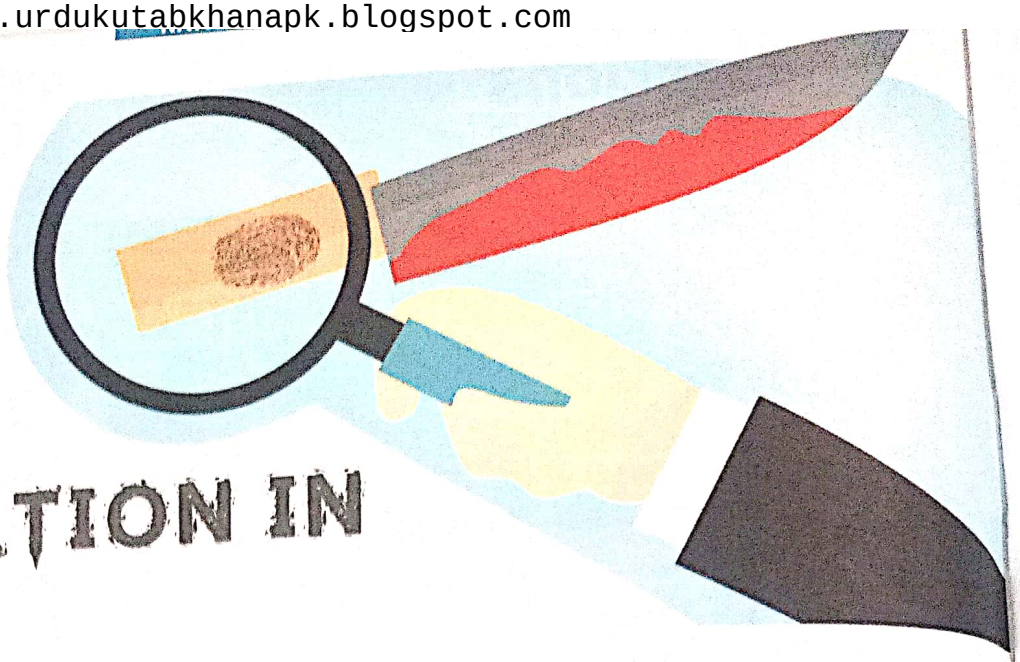

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION IN PAKISTAN

An Overview

Kamran Adil

Perceptions and realities ineluctably differ. The case in point is the comparison between criminal and civil justice streams in Pakistan. Popular perception is that civil justice is faring better than criminal justice. Contrary to this, the evidence, as recorded in the Rule of Law Index, 2020, suggests that criminal justice in Pakistan is in better shape than civil justice. The point is evidenced by the fact that criminal justice ranks 98/128 whereas civil justice is placed at 118th position. The comparison is not artificial. Qualitative and anecdotal evidence suggests that criminal justice is preferred over civil justice in Pakistan. The preference may be due to many reasons; one of them being the element of efficiency. Another factor is the element of coercion, which can only be brought about by resorting to criminal proceedings. In an unfair, unprofessional, power-driven and unaccountable criminal justice system, chances of influencing decision-making of investigation agencies always remain high. These inbuilt elements of efficiency and influence work as incentives for the status quo, and cause inertia against any efforts to reform or improve things on the ground. In addition, these elements are designed in favour of street bureaucrats as compared to top bureaucrats resulting in distorted public sector organizations. This is true across the spectrum of investigation agencies starting from police organizations to revenue authorities to anti-corruption bodies. In this context, the oft-used tool for putting state machinery into action is criminal law, which becomes kinetic through the mechanism of criminal investigations. Since most of the criminal investigations are carried out by police, therefore, the framework for this adumbration is situated in police working; in abstract form, however, the information may be equally applicable to all forms of criminal investigations in Pakistan. The purpose, concept, definition, types, principles and allied matters related to criminal investigations are being discussed here in a thematic manner:

A. Purpose and object

The purpose and object of a criminal investigation are stated in Rule 25.2(3) of the Punjab Police Rules, 1934, (adopted by all police organizations in Pakistan). It states that:

(1) It is the duty of an investigating officer to find out the truth of the matter under investigation;

(2) His object shall be to discover actual facts of the case

B. Concept and definition

Inquiry and investigation are often used as interchangeable terms by non-practitioners. In practice, the two concepts are different in their scope. While inquiry is limited to fact-finding generally, investigation goes beyond mere fact-finding and focuses on collection of evidence, besides its preservation, processing and presentation. In terms of authorization, inquiry is conducted by a magistrate, but investigation is done by police. No doubt, owing to its legal significance, the investigation is defined by Section 4(l) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, as 'collection of evidence by police...'.

C. Types and authorizations

Each type of offence may be investigated differently, resulting in as many types of investigations as many species of offences. For example, offences against person may involve collection of medical evidence alongside the testimonial evidence. On the other hand, for offences against property, the documentary evidence may be collected along with testimonial evidence. In similar manner, white collar and tax fraud offences require an investigator to collect documentary evidence comprising

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bank accounts, wealth statements and incorporation certificates to build up his case. The investigations may also be classified on the basis of the officers' authorizations. For example, a terrorism case is to be investigated by a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) under Section 19 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. The police officer investigating a terrorism case has to be an officer of no less than the rank of an inspector. Similarly, a narcotics case can only be investigated by a sub-inspector of police or above. The blasphemy case is to be investigated by an officer of the rank of Superintendent of Police or above. The authorizations have been included in law to ensure that experienced officers investigate heinous offences.

D. Principles

The law does not prescribe principles of investigation in the statutes. For instruction purposes, however, the following cardinal rules emanating out of statutory law, case law and international best practices are considered principles of investigation:

a. Statutory right to investigation

Investigation agencies/police have a statutory right to

investigation implying non-interference from all. The basis of this statutory right is deep-rooted in jurisprudence of Pakistan. It owes its origin to a Privy Council judgement in Emperor v. Kh Nazir Case (1944) that acknowledged the right to investigation and expounded its rationale in the following words:

> "The functions of the judiciary and the police are complementary, not overlapping, and the combination of individual liberty with a due observance of law and order is only to be obtained by leaving each to exercise its own function..."

b. Duty to find the truth

As noted above, the duty of an investigator is to find the truth. The number of versions and formalism of reports are no obstacles to his duty. This principle is based on Rule 25.2(3) of the Police Rules, 1934, as well as the decision of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in Sughran Bibi Case (2018), wherein, the duty of police to find truth irrespective of the formal process was reiterated.

c. Primacy of crime scene

Primacy of crime scene investigations increased with the advancement of use of scientific methods for investigations. It was already well known that best investigations are based on connecting criminals with the crime scenes. The scientific basis of this knowledge was buttressed by Locard's "Exchange Principle" that became a cornerstone of modern criminal investigations. The principle is based on Dr Edmond Locard's theory that 'every contact leaves a trace'. It may be interesting to note that Locard belonged to France and was known as its Sherlock Holmes. This principle reaffirmed the importance of crime scenes, leading to development of techniques regarding protection, preservation, photography, labelling, packaging, lifting, documenting and processing evidence from crime scene. Statutory rules regarding crime scene management are as under:

i. Police Rule 25.10 requires police to preserve crime scene and secure presence of witnesses;
ii. Police Rule 25.13 requires police to prepare plan of scene
iii. Police Rule 25.14 enables police to seek technical assistance from experts
iv. Police Rule 25.17 empowers supervisory officers to supervise and inspect crime scenes
v. Police Rule 25.26 deals with use of footprints and track evidence
vi. Police Rule 25.33 provides actions required from an investigation officer at the scene of occurrence in cases of death
vii. Police Rule 25.54 holds it mandatory for an investigation officer to send record of case-diaries from scene of occurrence (crime scene) to police station
viii. Police Rule 21.35(2) codifies the instructions that an investigation officer has to follow in cases of crimes against property on the examination of crime scene.

e. Use of information technology

Use of all pervasive information technology must now be counted in the principles of investigation. From crime scene to furthering investigation to trial, information technology remains central. In form of centralized data of identity like National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), information technology-based identity system serves as basic tool for identifying the complainant, victim, unknown accused, witnesses and experts. Likewise, the data of convicted and challaned criminals is also frequently used as a basic tool to further the investigation. IT-based communication systems in the form of telecommunication companies and service-providers help in verifying and corroborating varying stances in investigations. Information technology serves in two ways: one, it helps in maximizing the information

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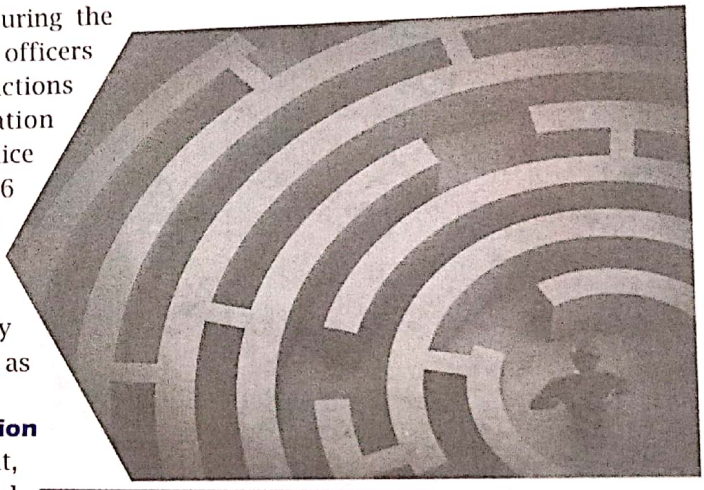
base for furtherance of investigation; two, it may be used to collect, collate, preserve and process evidence in efficient manner.

E. Accountability

With no definition of a defective investigation and owing to the fact that every case has its unique circumstances, the debate on what constitutes a defective investigation remains subjective. The only requirement under the law to charge an accused is 'sufficiency' of evidence; the 'sufficiency' has not been made quantifiable or no qualitative standards have been developed to objectively gauge performance of an investigator. There is need to introduce professional standards, certifications and accreditations for investigators. The accountability is mostly done through courts during the trials and by the supervisory officers who initiate departmental actions against delinquent investigation officers. In addition, the Police Order, 2002, in its Article 156 criminalized illegal search and vexatious arrest. Likewise, Section 27.2 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, specifically declares defective investigation as an offence.



F. Administration of investigation

From administrative viewpoint, many issues relate to criminal investigations. The chief amongst those are:

a. Cost of investigation

After introduction of Article 8 of the Police Order, 2002, the cost of investigation got statutory basis and, therefore, budget was allocated for this head. The quantum of money allocated for different heads of crimes needs periodical review in order to keep pace with inflationary pressures.

In addition, the disbursement of cost of investigation needs a lot of effort and may be specialized and simple audit rules are required to be issued to make claims of the cost of investigation efficient as well as widespread within police.

b. Transfer of investigation

Under the Police Act, 1861, criminal investigations were perpetual in the sense that criminal cases could be opened anytime by using unbridled discretion. This problem was addressed by Police Order, 2002, which provided that there could not be more than three investigations in a criminal case and each transfer was to take place through collective decision-making of a board comprising senior police officers. Whereas the mechanism introduced by Police Order, 2002, remedied the mischief of malicious prosecution, in practice, it was interpreted in a sense that second and third investigations were either changed, horizontally or vertically, with every change taking the investigation away from the crime scene. The reform brought stability to criminal investigation processes and needs to be further refined to keep the second and third investigations proximate to the crime scene.

c. Inter-provincial investigation

The inter-provincial investigation needs lot of coordination between the Home Departments of the provinces. This aspect has not been fully researched, and transfer of offenders and case property consumes a lot of time involving bureaucracy and judiciary.

d. Case property

The case property of criminal cases has to be preserved for long time and is to be produced by police in the courts. The custody is partially with forensic agencies for sampling and examination, but the custody of the case property essentially remains with low-level police officers. The regime of case property management needs to be improved especially with regard to electronic logging of case property to ensure chain of custody.

e. Production of witnesses

The production and protection of witnesses are responsibilities of police. There have been witness-protection laws, but without allocation of dedicated resources and clear lines of authority and responsibility, there is little likelihood of qualitative improvement with regards to witness protection and production.

Concluding remarks

The criminal investigations define police performance in Pakistan, besides reassuring trust in them by all and sundry. A good mix of preventive and detective policing strategies affects crime control and police image. Pakistan's quest for the rule of law very much depends on its commitment to introduce reforms relating to police and policing.

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A WAY FORWARD

Omer Hussan Bajwa

A. Introduction

During the last two decades, Factory Asia has taken the central position in global trade. China has emerged as a new demand-and-supply hub. India, Bangladesh and Vietnam have earned great dividends in this changing paradigm. However, Pakistan has not been seen anywhere in securing benefits. Pakistan is globally out of sync as it has one of the highest tariffs in the world. Continuation of protectionist policies in Pakistan has been the major culprit behind this state of affairs. Although a few manifestation of trade liberalization has been witnessed in the last two decades, yet, its extent has been very limited. In November last year, the incumbent government came up with one of the most-awaited policies, National Tariff Policy 2019-2024 (hereinafter NTP). It is a step towards reversing the trend of de-industrialization in the country and declining exports. Undoubtedly, prolonged de-industrialization has resulted in sluggish exports and unaffordable import costs, as well as erratic economic growth.

B. Currency of Topic

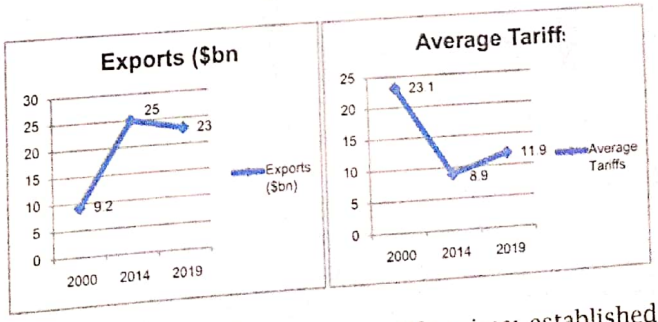
Trade paradigm of Pakistan has been infested with protectionist policies, high import tariffs and concessionary Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs) and Customs General Orders (CGOs). Resultantly, dismal picture of trade statistics, growing trend of de-industrialization and losing competitiveness of domestic products in both domestic and global markets are some of the deplorable outcomes that the country has to confront. Keeping in view all this, the government has come up with a step in the right direction by formulating the NTP.

C. Problem Statement

The deplorable situation of trade of Pakistan points finger at the continuation of flawed policies. Imposition of high tariffs on imports by considering tariffs as a source of revenue generation plays a pivotal role in deplorable trade growth. The NTP has come as an ambitious measure to plug the loopholes present in previous tariff regimes. However, its fruits, just like all other policies, lie in its effective implementation.

D. NTP: Salient Features

National Tariff Policy 2019-2024 has aptly and comprehensively assessed Pakistan's tariff regime; mentioned institutional responsibility of tariff setting; highlighted



the issues created by current tariff regime; established regional comparison; and mentioned objectives, principles and guidelines of new tariff policy.

Salient features of the NTP are listed below.

1. Pakistan's export growth has been in agreement with tariff liberalization. From 2000 to 2014, exports increased

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by 173% and tariff reduced from 23.1% to 8.9%. Since 2014, applied tariff has been increased to 11.9%. Resultantly, exports have decreased from $25bn to $23bn. Following graphs categorically explain this trend.

2. In the last three decades, significant reduction in tariff slabs has been witnessed.

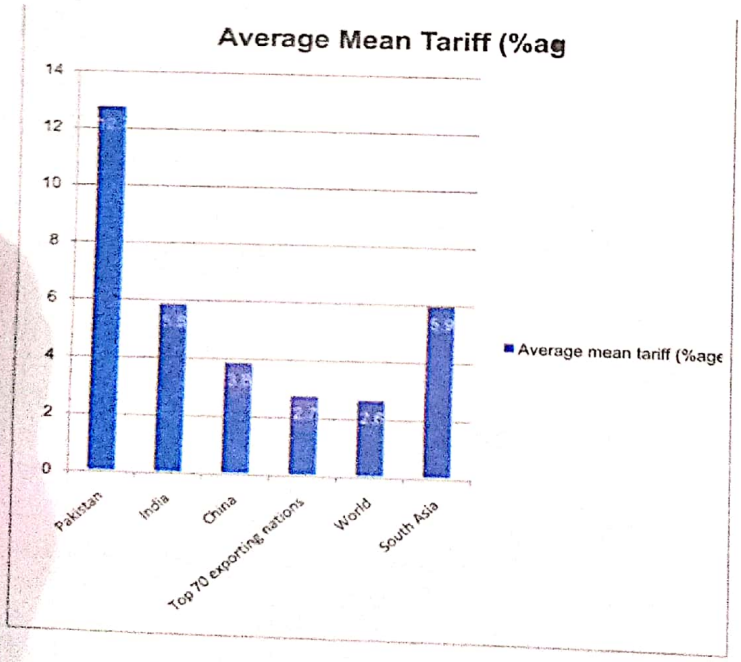
However, additional customs and regulatory duties have been imposed from time to time.

FY	Tariff slabs
1993	10
2015	6
2016	5
2017	4

3. It has been mentioned in the policy that tariff setting is not a revenue instrument, but a trade policy. The tariff policy and protection regime is the mandate of Commerce Division, and not of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) that has used tariff setting as a revenue instrument.

4. Current tariff regime has been responsible for numerous problems:

- Loss in competitiveness of export-oriented sectors owing to higher import tariffs.
- Decrease in share of domestic goods in the domestic market owing to tariff protections that bring inefficiencies in the manufacturing sector.
- Creation of anti-export bias by making domestic protected market more attractive.
- Formation of complex tariff structure.
- Increase in incentives for smuggling, under-invoicing and wrong declaration.

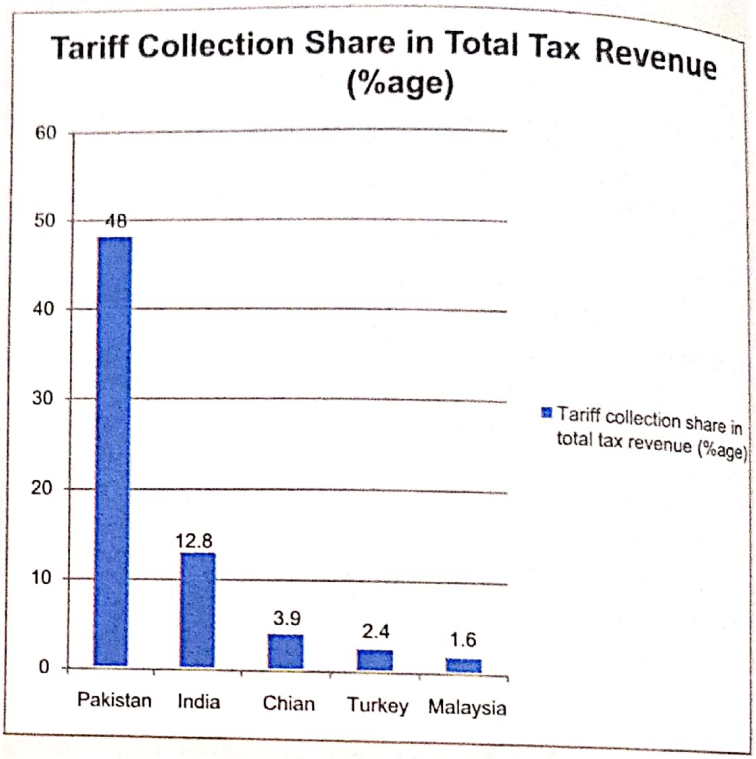


- Presence of intra-sector anomalies and discriminations.
- Hurdles in investment decisions owing to inconsistent and unpredictable tariff structure.

5. Among the top 70 exporting countries, Pakistan's average mean tariff is the highest: 12.7%. However, the weighted average tariff of these countries is just 2.7%. Besides this, contrary to other export-driven economies, Pakistan's tariff collection at import stage constitutes alarmingly 48% of its total tax revenues.

6. The NTP aims to improve competitiveness, increase employment opportunities, improve consumer welfare, and remove anomalies in tax system.

7. Some of the guidelines under the policy are tariff as trade policy instrument, simple and cascading tariff structure, strategic protection during infancy phase, and competitive import substitution subject to time-bound



protection.

8. Gradual, but significant, reduction in tariffs and regulatory duties, and time-bound protection to infant industries are some of the policy reforms that have been mentioned in the NTP.

9. The NTP will be shaped by intensive interaction among various ministries and institutions rather than a single agency entrusted to boost revenue. The FBR will no longer set the recommended tariff rates for approval by the cabinet. Instead, the responsibility will be delegated to a newly-created Tariff Policy Board (TPB).

E. Challenges

1. Administrative realignment

As per the NTP, tariff-setting is the mandate of Commerce Division, not of FBR anymore. However, in current trying circumstances, it will be a daunting task to reverse the decades-old onus back to Ministry of Commerce from FBR as the country is confronting fiscal deficit, severe economic choices and tough stabilization measures under IMF Stabilization Program. Besides this, capacity of Commerce Division to deliver and pacify the fears of revenue loss during the ongoing IMF program will be a difficult challenge.

2. Concerns regarding decrease in revenue

It has been observed that after the implementation of the

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NTP, there will be revenue loss of around Rs. 250 billion in FY21 and Rs. 270-320 billion in FY22. Definitely, the policy aims to have uniform low tariffs across the board, eventually. However, there still is a long way to go. In this perspective, the policy might face a severe opposition and backlash in the short run.

3. Tariff Policy board: a facilitator or another bureaucratic hurdle?

History of Pakistan is replete with formation of 'boards' but their performance has always been in question. Formation of Tariff Policy Board (TPB) that has to be chaired by the Commerce Minister/Advisor with representatives of ministries and divisions may be tantamount to creating another high-level bureaucratic hurdle.

4. Time-bound protections

Another major challenge is the successful removal of those time-bound protections that are mentioned in the policy in the future. History bears testimony to the fact that such protections have never been time-bound. For instance, the government offered protection to the polyester sector in 1995. Twenty-five years later, the sector is still protected. It has been witnessed that once any protection has been offered, even though it has been time-bound, manufacturers have never seemed to graduate out of it.

5. Poorly-negotiated Free and Preferential Trade Agreements

Poorly-negotiated Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) is another challenge that the government has to confront for effectively implementing this policy. It is an admitted fact that trade agreements have done no favour to Pakistan's current account deficit. Trade statistics with China in particular, and with South Asian countries in general, speak clearly about loopholes present in these agreements.

6. The dangerous lure of self-sufficiency

Covid-19 pandemic has shaken the foundations of globalization and free trade. Public opinion around the world is shifting away from globalization and the dangerous lure of self-sufficiency is taking ground. The trade will suffer as countries abandon the idea that firms and goods are treated equally regardless of where they come from. The new era of economic self-reliance has begun. These changes around the world pose challenge to the implementation of policy. However, inclusion of new terms, competitive import substitution, in the policy is in agreement with these changes.

In a nutshell, National Tariff Policy 2019-2024, is a step in the right direction as it reverses administrative imbalances. The policy not only highlights issues associated with previous tariff regimes but also mentions guidelines to overcome those. It has always been easy to approve a policy, but harder to put it into action. Undoubtedly, the fruits of policy lie in its effective implementation. Following are some of the recommendations in this regard that keeping in view the past experiences, though, seem an uphill task to undertake, yet there is no blinking at the fact that the salvation of the country is dependent on them.

A Way Forward

1. Continuation of policy

The history of Pakistan is replete with instances of immature discontinuation of policies, irrespective of their soundness. Undoubtedly, immature abandonment does more harm than good. In this perspective, the government has to ensure continuation of policy by building the capacity of institutions that are responsible for its effective implementation. As there will be revenue loss by the reduction of import tariffs, it must not be done at once.

2. Institutional capacity-building

Capacity-building of commerce division is required for offsetting the fear of loss of revenue owing to decrease in tariffs. Besides this, FBR should be made to rely on direct taxes instead of indirect taxes, including tariffs.

3. Strict check on time-bound protections

Contrary to the past practices, removal of all time-bound protections should be ensured after the lapse of stipulated time. In this regard, strict monitoring of all the protected and infant sectors should be done.

4. Vigilance in signing FTAs and PTAs

Another recommendation is pertaining to signing of FTAs and PTAs. The government should act prudently while signing such agreements. Moreover, more venues should be explored and any available opportunity should be cashed instantly. For instance, last year, an American lawmaker, Senator Lindsey Graham, hinted at signing of an FTA between Pakistan and USA. However, Pakistan could not grab the opportunity.

5. Reciprocity in trade tariffs in Covid-19 pandemic world

Pakistan should act vigilantly in the Covid-19 pandemic world by keeping an eye on all threats and opportunities. As it seems that post-pandemic world will be the one having tariff walls, Pakistan should consider reciprocity as General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) allows this to all participatory countries.

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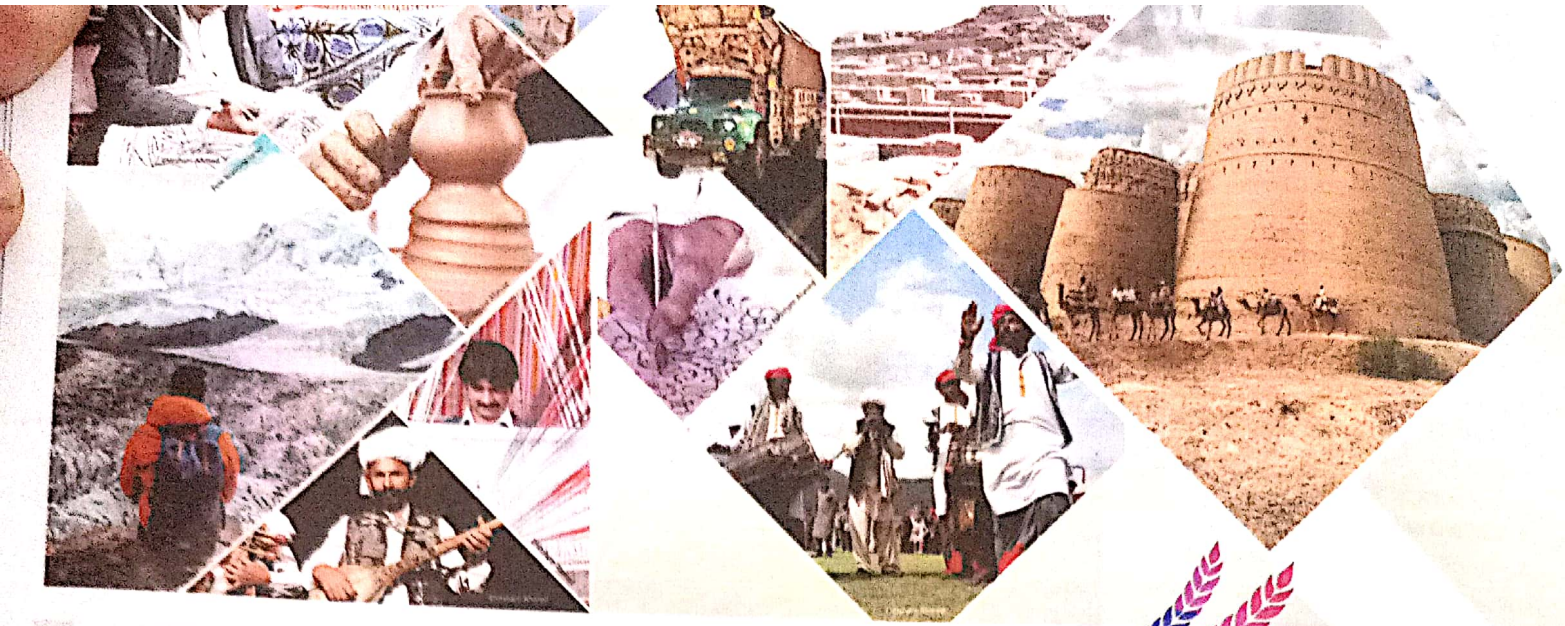

THE DIRECTION OF TOURISM IN Punjab

Asim Raza

The overall dimension of tourism in Punjab is going to change. The statement might sound a bit exaggerating at the moment, yet, in reality, it is as honest and factual as one can wish any quality news to be. After reading this article, you will also be in consonance with me in this particular aspect.

In total, there are five specific areas in which Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP), the government-owned organization delegated with the responsibility of tourism promotion in Punjab, has taken such steps, and they augur extremely well for the future of tourism in Punjab. Engagement of private sector in tourism projects deserves to be discussed in priority over others. TDCP owns many tourists resorts across the province. Traditionally, these resorts were being operated by the Corporation on its own. Whatsoever claims TDCP might be making regarding the profitability and quality orientation of these resorts, it needs no argument to prove that business by no means is any government's cup of tea. Ideally, the only yet most important task of the government is to provide conducive and enabling environment to the private sector, and also monitoring and regulating its affairs. TDCP had not been following this model and was playing the role of a mere competitor of the private sector in the field of tourism. It has, however, changed its operational model now (thanks to the Punjab Tourism Policy 2019) and has started to offer its resorts to private sector on long-term lease basis. The shift will not only improve the

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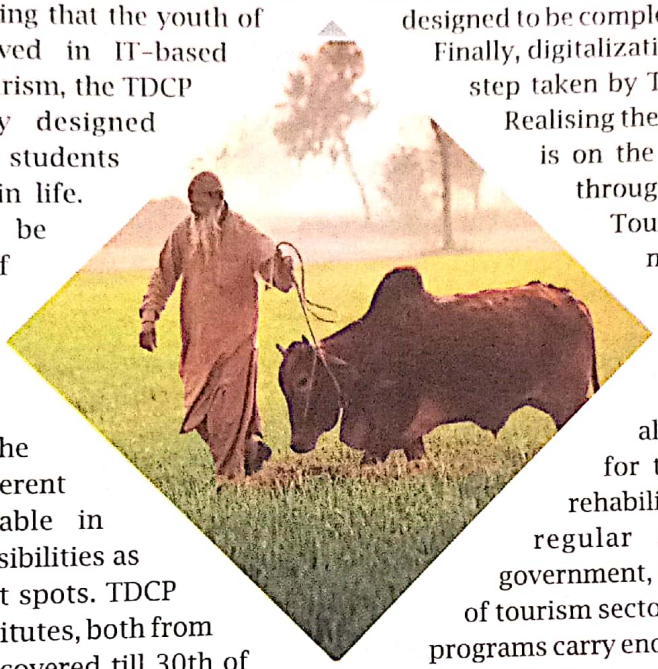
income and expenditure account of TDCP, but will also make it possible for the tourists to avail themselves of quality services while being on tours. Likewise, the net worth of these assets would also increase because of the expansion made by the private sector. The most appreciable is the fact that absolute transparency has been ensured in the overall process of leasing because of which internationally reputed private entities seemed willing to participate and join hand with the government. Leasing of TDCP Nankana Resort to M/s Hashoo Group and TDCP Khajot Resort to M/s Heaven can be quoted as pertinent examples here.

The second commendable step taken by TDCP is its youth mobilization programme. Realising that the youth of the country is getting involved in IT-based entertainment, at the cost of tourism, the TDCP has initiated a meticulously designed program to sensitize the young students to the importance of tourism in life. Tourism officers of TDCP will be visiting educational institutes of Punjab and would deliver tourism-related lectures thereof. These attractively designed lectures aim at familiarizing the students with the tourism potential of Punjab, different economic opportunities available in tourism sector, and their responsibilities as tourists while enjoying at tourist spots. TDCP has targeted 500 educational institutes, both from private and public sector, to be covered till 30th of June 2021.



Thirdly, the government of the Punjab has a very keen focus on developing new sites as tourist destinations. For a common tourist, the tourism of Punjab is nothing beyond Murree and Lahore uptil now. But the situation, for sure, is going to change very soon. TDCP has targeted many new sites like Kotli Sattian, Narr Kahuta, Soon Valley, Chakwal, Attock, Koh-e-Suleman, and Tounsa, and different development projects are being undertaken at these places to develop them as popular tourist destinations. Likewise, different tourism events are also going to be conducted at these very places. The overall plan is to shift the burden of Murree to other places of Punjab, opening economic opportunities for the people of the province on equitable basis.

Fourthly, TDCP has initiated a sharply focused program named showcasing Punjab in order to promote the unseen and unexplored beauty of the province. Under the program, more than fifty documentaries, covering different tourist sites of Punjab, have been developed. These documentaries would be run on social and electronic media and would play an effective role in popularizing the tourist sites of Punjab at national and international level. Organization of different types of tourist events and publication of tourism journals and booklets are also included in the program which is designed to be completed by June 2021.

Finally, digitalization of the tourism sector is also a step taken by TDCP in the very right direction. Realising the importance of technology, TDCP is on the way to facilitating the tourists through IT programs and devices. Tourism app, web portal and queue management system are a few examples of the many steps being taken for tourists' facilitation in Punjab.

In a nutshell, TDCP is highly alive to the importance of tourism for the economic revival and social rehabilitation of the country. Under the regular supervision of the federal government, different steps for the promotion of tourism sector are being taken. All the ongoing programs carry enormous potential for changing the outlook of the tourism sector. The moment these programs are completed, tourists would start reaping their benefits immediately. Though it took more than 70 years for the tourism department of Punjab to at least start moving in the right directions, the good news is that it has finally started doing so.

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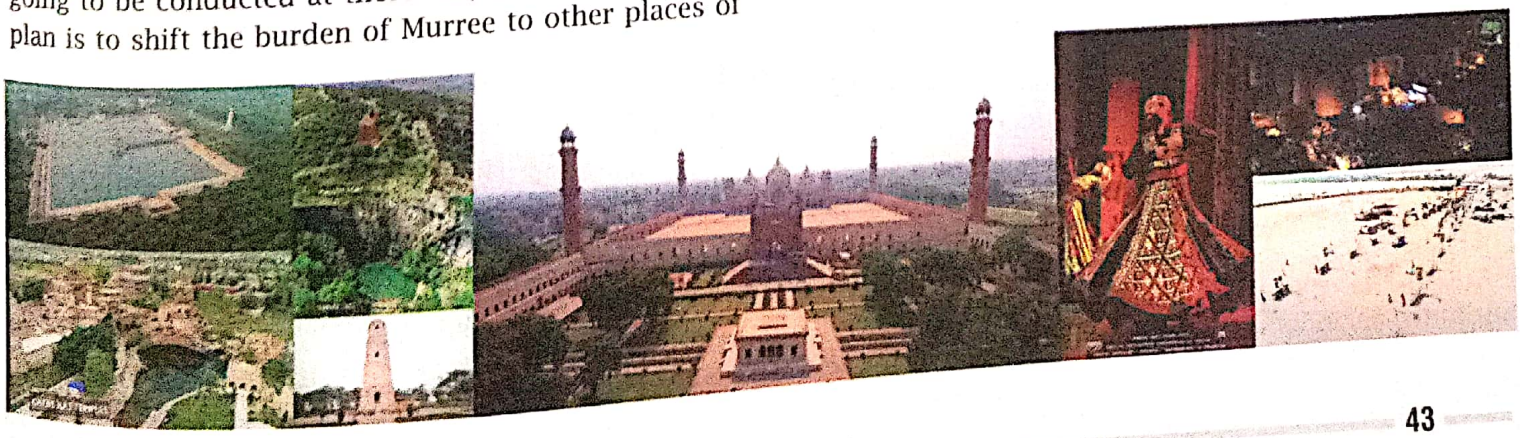

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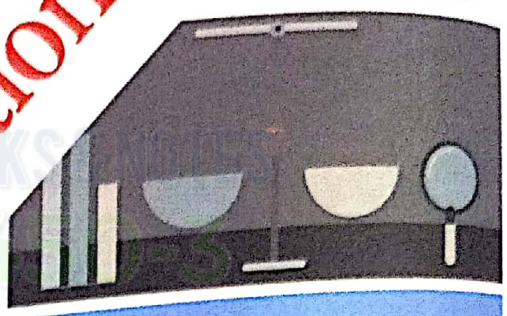
Enforcing GST on e-commerce Transactions



Bilal Hassan

Cross-border trade in goods and services has existed for and/or many centuries and, in practice, the traditional VAT (Value-added Tax)/GST (General Sales Tax) rules were quite capable of ensuring that domestic consumption of goods and services was taxed, and that consumption of goods and services outside the country was relieved from the burden of VAT/GST. Traditionally, cross-border transactions in goods and services mainly consisted of business-to-business (B2B) scenarios. If a cross-border transaction results in the physical importation of goods, it is up to the customs authorities to ensure that import VAT/GST is collected before the imported goods are released from customs control.

Likewise, services supplied by non-resident service-providers to resident customers are subject to VAT/GST if, under the place-of-supply rules, the services are deemed to be supplied in the customer's country; services that are deemed to be supplied outside the country are treated as outside the scope of VAT/GST system.

However, since VAT/GST is a consumption tax, imposing VAT/GST on business-to-business (B2B) transactions does not generate any net tax revenues because businesses engaged in taxed transactions are entitled to recover VAT/GST paid on their business expenses (deduction of input VAT/GST).

The increasing popularity of the internet (development of 'e-commerce') has had the effect that not only businesses but also private individuals (final consumers) increasingly buy goods and services from abroad (business-to-consumer—B2C—transactions). Countries obviously have a financial interest in ensuring that VAT/GST is collected on imported goods and services destined for final consumers because final consumers are not entitled to recover VAT/GST paid on the purchase of goods and services. Since VAT/GST is a consumption tax, services supplied by resident service-providers to non-resident recipients should not be taxed if consumption takes place abroad.

The upswing of e-commerce has led to special VAT/GST rules relating to cross-border supplies of goods and services, in particular telecommunications services and electronic services (electronically supplied services).

Finally, e-commerce has also led to the phenomenon that businesses all over the world offer on their websites goods and services that are actually being supplied by a third-party supplier. Those websites act as an electronic platform and the customer may not even know who the actual supplier is. In terms of VAT/GST, the operator of an electronic platform may be the actual supplier or may act as a disclosed or undisclosed agent. For VAT/GST purposes, it is of essential importance to determine which party (the actual supplier or the (undisclosed) agent) is liable for VAT/GST on the underlying transaction, and to ensure that non-resident tax debtors comply with their

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national VAT/GST obligations.

From the perspective of VAT/GST, the concept of "e-commerce" itself has no relevance. The relevance of "e-commerce" is that it has led to an enormous increase in cross-border supplies of goods and services. Not relevant is how the goods or services are ordered (by telephone, by printed order form or through the internet). It is also irrelevant how the goods and services are delivered, albeit that special rules apply to specific services that are delivered through the internet.

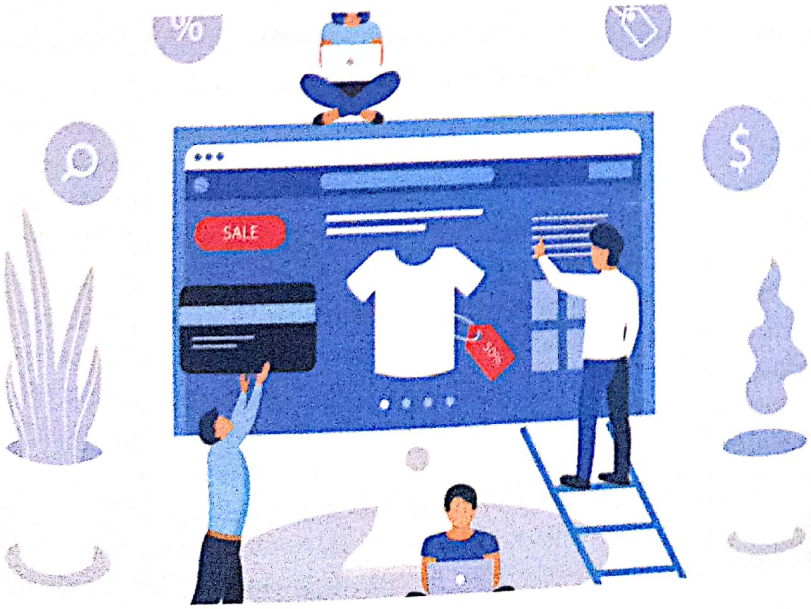
Domestic supplies (between resident suppliers and resident customers) are obviously subject to VAT/GST. More interesting is how cross-border supplies (between non-resident suppliers and resident customers and between resident suppliers and non-resident customers) are treated in order to ensure that domestic consumption of goods and services is actually subject to VAT/GST, and that consumption of goods and services outside the country is relieved from the burden of VAT/GST.

The upswing of the internet (e-commerce) has also led to the phenomenon that businesses all over the world offer on their websites goods and services that they supply themselves or that actually being supplied by a third-party supplier. Those websites act as an electronic marketplace and the customer may not even know who the actual supplier is. In terms of VAT/GST, the operator of the platform (electronic marketplace) may act as a disclosed (intermediary) or as an undisclosed (commissionaire) agent.

Generally speaking, if the operator of an electronic marketplace acts as an undisclosed agent (commissionaire) between the actual supplier and the customer, the agent is treated as the party who makes the supply to the customer. The undisclosed agent must issue the invoice in relation to the supply and is liable for remittance of the VAT/GST due on the transaction. In B2B scenarios, the reverse-charge mechanism applies if the operator of the electronic platform is not resident.

By contrast, where the operator of an electronic marketplace acts as a disclosed agent (intermediary) between the actual supplier and the buyer of goods or services, the actual supplier makes the supply to the customer. In that scenario, the invoice may be issued by either the actual supplier or the agent, if the agent is registered for VAT/GST. In B2B scenarios, the reverse-charge mechanism applies if the actual supplier is not resident.

Since the reverse-charge mechanism for services is limited to B2B transactions, the tax authorities must ensure that VAT/GST is collected on imported services consumed by private resident individuals, which is virtually impossible or excessively difficult if the supplier or service-provider is established abroad or if the operator of an electronic platform (undisclosed agent) is established outside the country.



As e-commerce is in particular associated with an explosive growth of B2C cross-border transactions, the VAT/GST rules need additional arrangements to ensure that domestic consumption of goods and services is properly taxed.

The writer serves as Additional Director Intelligence and Investigation (IR), Federal Board of Revenue.

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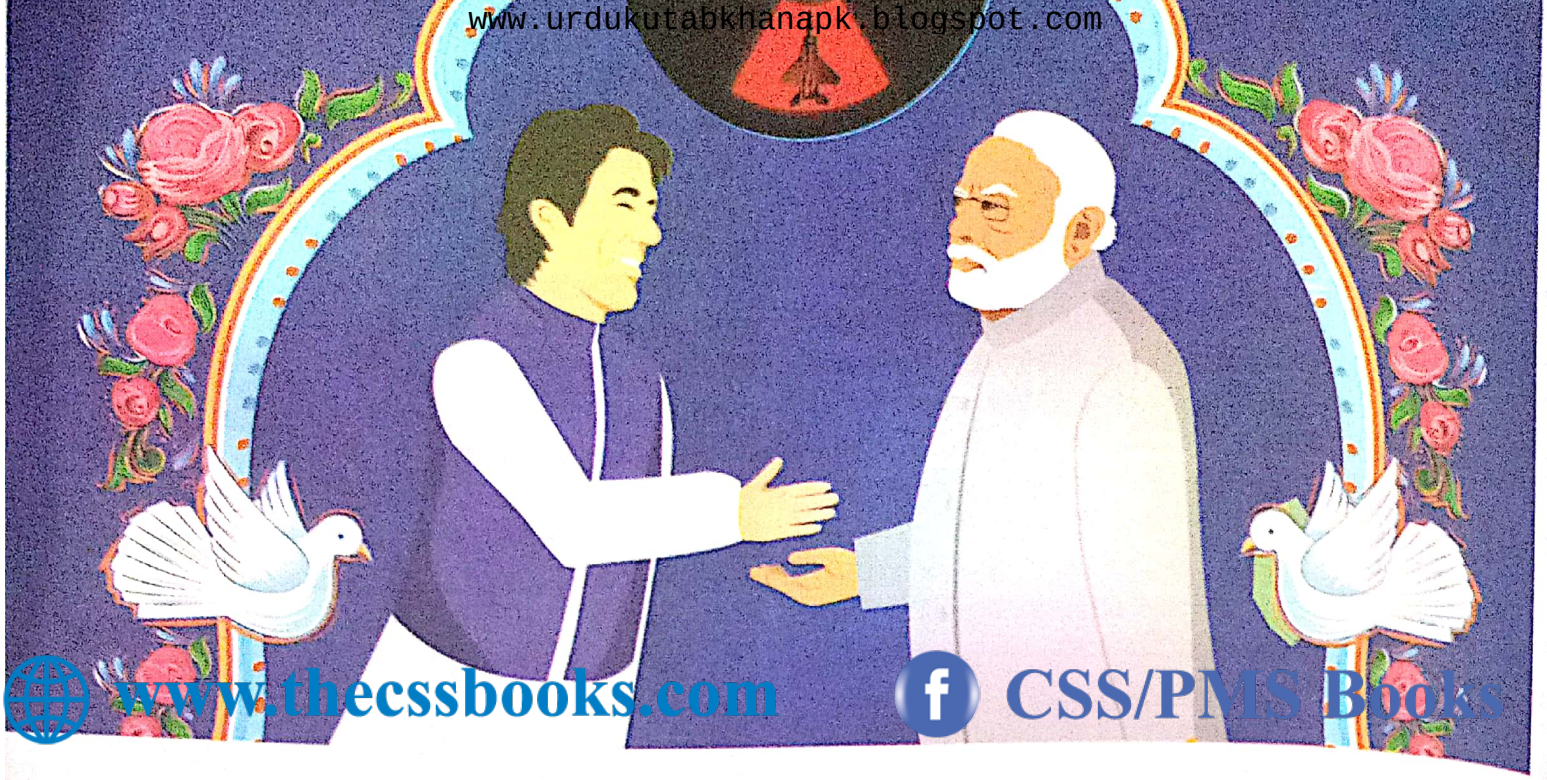

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NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY OF PAKISTAN

Aftab H. Wahla

Since the dawn of the nuclear age—with the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—nuclear diplomacy has been on the centre-stage in international affairs. The post-war multilateralism has given significant expansion to the scope and jurisdiction of traditional diplomacy and, today, economy, technology exchange, scientific cooperation, financial collaboration and international law fall within its ambit. This form of diplomacy has further broadened the scope of conventional diplomacy. Nuclear diplomacy can be explained as an expression of a country's nuclear policy, projection of its peaceful nuclear credentials, and articulation of a forceful narrative to justify its stance on various international initiatives aimed at nonproliferation and disarmament. It is also instrumental in convincing the international community on the significance of nuclear technology for national security and national development. In the following paragraphs, an in-depth discussion will be made regarding the underlying objectives of the nuclear diplomacy of Pakistan, and the official position that the country adheres to on different nuclear issues.

Nuclear diplomacy of Pakistan rests on some well-established principles and objectives. The establishment of beneficial relations with all other states based on sovereign equality, contribution to the global security and arms-control architecture, strict compliance with global norms and best practices as a responsible nuclear state, preservation of peace and strategic parity and ensuing regional stability at minimalistic level of armament, advocacy for a non-discriminated access to peaceful nuclear technology for socioeconomic development, and contribution as a mainstream partner in global nonproliferation efforts are some guiding principle and objectives that provide conceptual framework for nuclear policy formulation and decision-making process in Pakistan.

Arms control and disarmament including nonproliferation is an important pillar of nuclear

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diplomacy. Arms control aims at limiting the number of weapons and regulating their use through bilateral and multilateral treaties, agreements and arrangements, whereas disarmament targets the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and advocates for the minimization of the level of conventional weapons. In view of regional and strategic imperatives under which Pakistan had acquired the status of a nuclear state, it has adopted a position that reflects its security concerns and, at the same time, unearths the discriminatory nature of international arms control and disarmament regimes. Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which aims to legalize the nuclear status of P5—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and attempts to de-legitimize the nuclear status of non-P5 states, i.e. Pakistan, India, North Korea and Israel. The inherent discriminatory nature of the treaty and India's hegemonic designs have rendered the country non-signatory. Pakistan has neither signed nor ratified the NPT.

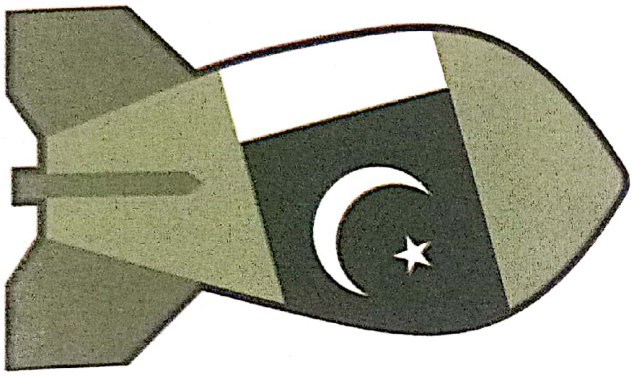
The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is another important multilateral instrument that prohibits all nuclear test explosions. Advanced level of Indo-Russian negotiations over the acquisition of S-400 surface-to-air missile defence system by India; nuclearization of Indian Ocean with the deployment of INS Arihant, a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine; and recent test launch of hypersonic ballistic missiles are some regional imperatives that are forcing Pakistan to not sign and ratify CTBT. Pakistan has instead offered a mutual test ban arrangement which India has rejected.

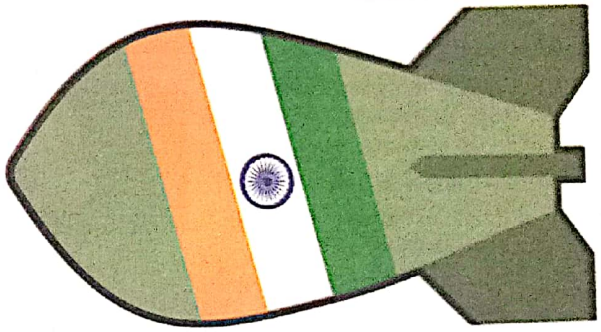
The Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FCMT) was designed to eliminate the fissile material stockpile and harmonize the NPT and CTBT. Pakistan is the only country that has blocked the negotiation on FMCT as it opposes the treaty owing to discriminatory nuclear policies of the West on civilian nuclear technology, growing conventional and non-conventional imbalance in the region, absence of any arms-control regime between India and Pakistan, acquisition of destabilizing capabilities by India to nuclearize outer space and, most importantly, the likelihood of erosion of the nuclear deterrence in the region, especially after the Indo-US nuclear deal. The RSS-BJP regime in India has further deepened the sense of insecurity in Pakistan. So, it will continue to adhere to its rigid approach on FMCT.

In addition to the above-mentioned conventions, Pakistan has also ratified conditionally the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and ratified, unconditionally, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In a keynote address at launch of Arms Control & Disarmament Centre (ACDC) on October 30, 2019, Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmod justified Pakistan's official stance on arms control and disarmament. He argued that BJP-caused strategic instability and threat of dismemberment illustrated "serious perils for peace that stem from extremist ideology and hegemonic ambitions." Pakistan could not be expected to one-sidedly pick up the burden of maintaining peace all times (by accepting nuclear disarmament).

Articulation of a robust narrative to convince the international community regarding eligibility of Pakistan to join the multilateral export control regime is an integral part of our nuclear diplomacy. Multilateral export control groups constitute an important pillar of international nonproliferation regime, and membership of these groups can help Pakistan to access international nuclear trade for peaceful purposes like nuclear power generation, health, agriculture and industry-related applications of civil nuclear technology. Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Australia Group, Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Wassenaar Arrangement are export control regimes reinforcing global nonproliferation efforts.

The 48-member NSG was established in 1974 in response to India's nuclear explosions. It aims to prevent the civil nuclear trade from being misused for military purposes. Apart from robust legislative, regulatory and enforcement mechanisms for internal control, NSG requires mandatory adherence to NPT or Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone treaty which has rendered the inclusion of non-NPT states in the group next to impossible. But, here again, the West has adopted discriminatory policies vis-à-vis India and





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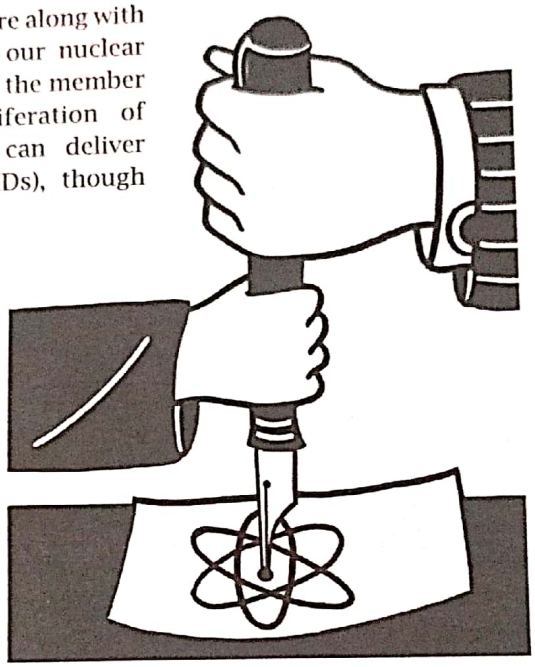
Pakistan. US-India civil nuclear deal and subsequent issuance of India-specific waiver by NSG in 2008 have helped India do nuclear trade with the USA. In addition, this duplicity has brightened the prospects for India's membership of the prestigious nuclear club on the back of lucrative nuclear business opportunities it offers. Pakistan has vehemently opposed this duplicity and demanded strict adherence to criteria-based admission, rather than a country-specific entry. Although our bid to join NSG in 2016 met with failure along with that of India, it did help highlight our nuclear credentials. Similarly, Pakistan is not the member of MTCR that aims at nonproliferation of unmanned delivery systems that can deliver weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), though India joined the regime in 2016.



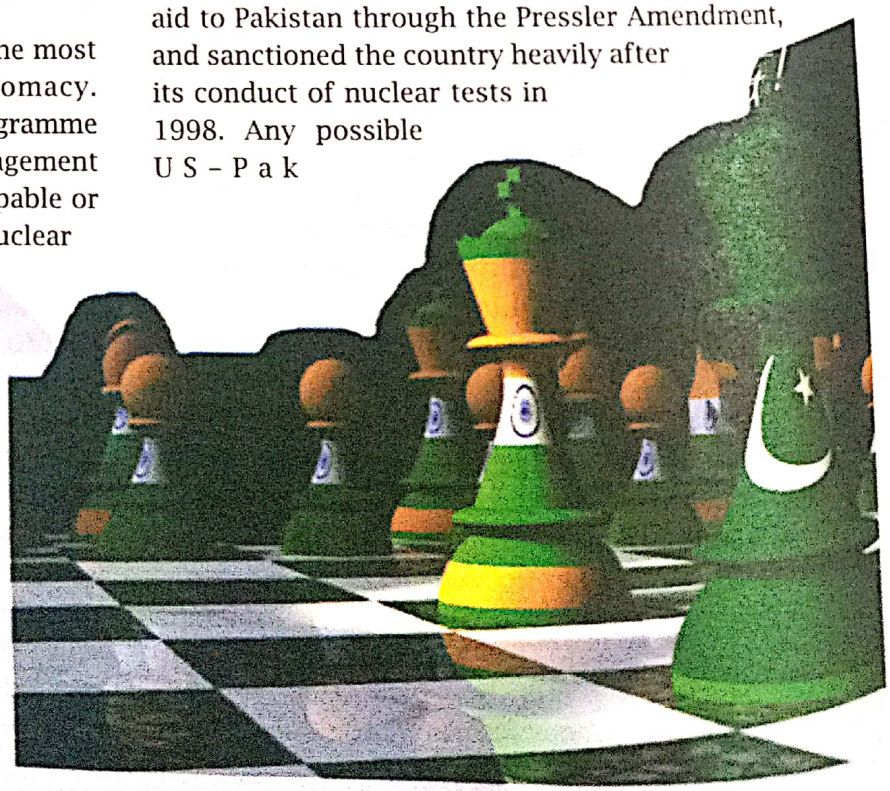
Australia Group that seeks strict adherence to nonproliferation of biological and chemical weapons is also a platform which Pakistan is yet to approach for membership.

Wassenaar Arrangement which is an informal platform to regulate conventional weapons production and trade can be instrumental for increasing self-sufficiency of Pakistan in defence production. Pakistan is not a member of any export control regime, but the country's strategic policy makers must prepare a strong case for getting membership of these regimes because Pakistan has requisite infrastructure, expertise, manpower and ability to supply NSG-controlled items, goods and services for full range of nuclear applications.

Talks with key nuclear states constitute one of the most crucial areas of Pakistan's nuclear diplomacy. Mainstreaming of the country's nuclear programme requires sustained, coordinated and deep engagement with the USA, China, India and other nuclear-capable or nuclear-armed nations. Pakistan needs civilian nuclear technology for various objectives with nuclear power generation being the most important. Since Pakistan is neither a signatory to NPT nor a member of other export control regimes, it cannot do nuclear trade with other countries. In terms of bilateral nuclear talks and negotiations, Pakistan has maintained comprehensive contacts with China, India and USA and regularly engages with other states as well.

Sino-Pak nuclear cooperation dates back to the days of Bhutto who signed a clandestine agreement with Mao Zedong and started Pakistan's nuclear programme for both military and civilian purposes. Pak-China Agreement on Transfer of Civil Nuclear Technology in 1986 was the first publicly-signed nuclear pact. Since the bilateral cooperation remained in the shrouds of mystery, it is alleged that China provided technical assistance in the area of fissile material production and nuclear-weapon designs, besides providing 50kg of weapons-grade uranium to Pakistan. The US-India nuclear deal, and the ensuing prospects of strategic disparity in the region, provided further momentum to enhance the bilateral nuclear cooperation in various areas. Currently, Pakistan is expanding its nuclear power generation from existing capacity of 1350MW to 3346MW with Chinese assistance. In the area of nuclear cooperation as well, China has stood staunchly with Pakistan and refused to give in to world pressure regarding its deep-rooted strategic and comprehensive cooperation with the country, despite its non-NPT status.

The United States has always linked Pakistan's nuclear programme to its strategic interests. During Afghan war, and given Pakistan's inevitable role in countering the Soviet invasion, US ignored Pakistan's rapid strides in the development of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, but right after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, it cut economic and military aid to Pakistan through the Pressler Amendment, and sanctioned the country heavily after its conduct of nuclear tests in 1998. Any possible U S - P a k



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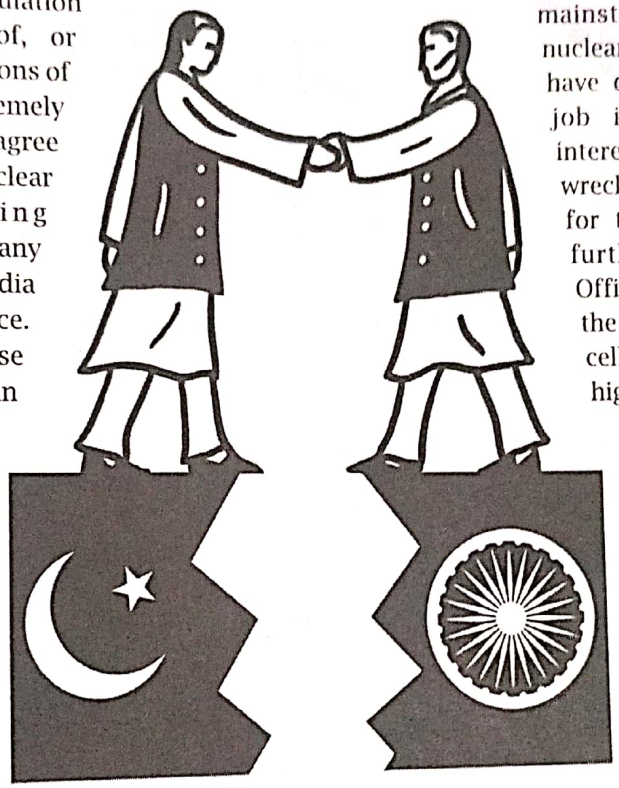
nuclear deal would require Pakistan to cap or freeze its nuclear expansion, limit its ballistic missile programme, dismantle tactical weapons and the delivery systems and adhere to unilateral strategic restraint with respect to India. It is obvious that Pakistan can ill afford unilateral restraint as it will be tantamount to surrendering to India's hegemonic and expansionist designs. In the perspective of fast-evolving regional and international security dynamics and US-led encirclement policies targeting China, it is certain that US-Pak nuclear talks will remain paralyzed and hostage to US-China rivalry. Nonetheless, it is crucially important for Pakistan to continue its strategic communication and engagement with the United States so as to show that it has a robust physical security and safety of its civilian and military installations.

Miscommunication and miscalculation can lead to accidental use of, or accidents in, the nuclear installations of both India and Pakistan. It is extremely important for both countries to agree upon some basic contours of nuclear CBMs (confidence-building measures) in order to avoid any mishap. But, unfortunately, India has adopted a very rigid stance. Although it adheres to no first use policy, it is generally taken in Pakistan as an eyewash to carry out sub-conventional warfare or launch the so-called surgical strikes.



The most pertinent example of such a CBM is the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities which was signed by India and Pakistan in 1988. Under this agreement, both countries exchange the lists of their nuclear installations on January 1 every year. Both countries have also maintained a moratorium on nuclear tests, and a hotline at the level of DG Military Operations as well. Pakistan has offered, many a time, multiple initiatives to maintain strategic stability in the South Asian region. Strategic Restraint Regime that consisted of three defining elements—stable deterrence, proportionate reduction in armed forces and negotiated settlement of political disputes including Kashmir—was such an initiative that India rebuffed. In the present circumstances, commencement of Indo-Pak nuclear talks is a far-fetched idea. RSS-BJP ideology, which is the interplay of incurable obsession with Pakistan, hegemonic ambitions and religious fanaticism, would continue to pose serious threats to the regional balance both in conventional and non-conventional spheres. In the near future, Pakistan would continue seeking diversification of its delivery systems, expansion in the fissile material production and devise countermeasures to offset the fast-deteriorating strategic balance in the region.

In the end, it is apt to conclude that nuclear diplomacy plays a significant role in reinforcing strategic stability. Pakistan's deft nuclear diplomacy has long played a determinant part in steering the country out of multiple crises. From avoiding the signing of NPT to successfully thwarting Western demands for restriction on nuclear enrichment at Kahuta, from concluding civil nuclear agreement with China to fighting a diplomatic battle in the aftermath of 1998 tests, from avoiding penalties in the wake of A.Q. Khan proliferation scam to mainstreaming of Pakistan's civil nuclear programme, our diplomats have done a remarkable, exemplary job in protecting our national interests through intense and nerve-wrecking diplomacy. It is imperative for the incumbent government to further strengthen the Foreign Office. In this regard, strengthening the arms control and disarmament cell, intense diplomatic drive to highlight the double standards of West on disarmament and nonproliferation, renewed efforts to secure the membership of prestigious Export Control Regime through showcasing the peaceful nuclear credentials of Pakistan, emphasis upon reciprocal Strategic Control Regime in South Asia, signing of civil nuclear agreements with friendly Muslim countries under IAEA's safeguards, and most importantly, launching a coherent and well-coordinated diplomatic campaign to expose the RSS-BJP ultra-nationalist and extremist irredentist and expansionist thinking so as to justify Pakistan's constant efforts to strengthen our conventional and non-conventional defence mechanism, is more than necessary. Pakistan's diplomacy must adopt an offensive posture to seek international legitimization of our nuclear status.

The writer is a graduate of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. He writes on national and international affairs.

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Pakistan-Bangladesh Economic Ties

A Pragmatic Approach

Since July 22 when Prime Minister Imran Khan and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina spoke by telephone, there have been growing calls for reconciliation between both countries as it is more than evident that political and economic compulsions appear to be taking both the leaders towards rapprochement. Despite an unfriendly political environment, trade has been considered one of the major factors raising hopes of a thaw in their otherwise frosty relationship. In fact, Bangladesh is the third top export destination of Pakistan in Asia, after China and Afghanistan. Both the countries had a total trade of $700.39 million in 2019-20, wherein Pakistani exports amounted to $654.79 million and import from Bangladesh stood at $45.60 million.

Aftab Abbasi

There's a Mandela moment on the horizon between twins in the Subcontinent. The two South Asian Muslim-majority nations, Pakistan and Bangladesh, are making efforts now to bridge the gap that spoilers had taken advantage of. Certain compelling developments in the region have provided windows of opportunities to both to bury an acrimonious past and seek rapprochement—this time cautiously, wittingly, competently and publicly. Therefore, as India's relations with its neighbours in the South Asian region deteriorate, Pakistan and Bangladesh are making a push to build diplomatic, economic and cultural ties that could upend decades of historic arrangements in the region. Indeed, a number of recent diplomatic developments have hinted at a thaw in a long-troubled Pakistan-Bangladesh equation. For instance, on July 22, Prime Minister Imran Khan invited his Bangladeshi counterpart, Sheikh Hasina, to visit Islamabad in a rare phone call, which came just weeks after a "quiet" meeting between Pakistan's high commissioner to Dhaka, Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, and Bangladeshi Foreign Minister A. K. Abdul Momen. According to Ambassador Siddiqui, the aim of the huddle was "to further promote bilateral relations with a forward-looking approach" given a desire from both sides to strengthen ties, particularly through private-sector partnerships. "There is a huge potential in bilateral economic and commercial cooperation and the two sides may work together to realize this potential with a focus on bringing our respective private sectors closer," he said.

Untapped trade potential in South Asia

South Asia is home to a fifth of mankind, and to almost half of the people living in poverty. It is sad that many South Asian countries are seen to prefer distant countries as trade partners to their close neighbouring economies. Whereas, a 2018 study by the World Bank strongly argues that regional cooperation in South Asia can power the entire region to grow faster and

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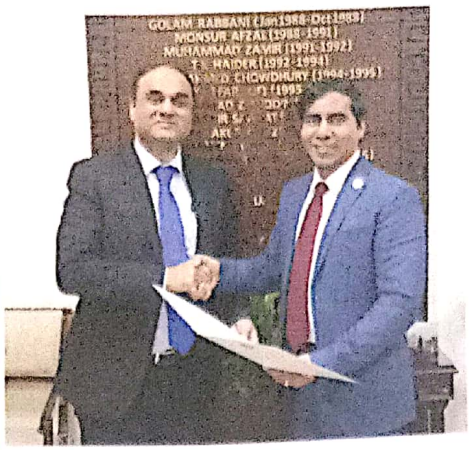

improve standards of living. Using the gravity model approach, the report estimated that in 2015, the trade between Bangladesh and Pakistan has a potential to be valued at $1,376 million instead of $837 million and trade between the countries of South Asia to be valued at $67 billion instead of $23 billion.

The report aptly stated that the big gap between trade potential and actual trade in 2015 may be largely attributed to the gap in bilateral trade between Bangladesh and India and between India and Pakistan, three of the largest economies in the region. Hence it is important to state that a stronger regional cooperation for sustainable peace and prosperity can be achieved through the improvement of bilateral relationship and people-to-people exchanges. Within this context of regional cooperation, paying attention to geographical proximity and other socioeconomic, cultural and religious factors, the importance of economic relation between the two most populous Muslim countries in South Asia—Pakistan and Bangladesh—cannot be overemphasized.

The rationale of enhancing bilateral trade

The rationale of enhancing bilateral trade with neighbouring countries can be explained by the unprecedented price hike of onion in Bangladesh in the year 2019. Though the current price of onion is Tk30 (USD 0.35) per kilogram in retail markets of Dhaka, onion prices shot up to Tk 300 (USD 3.54) in November 2019 due to a supply crunch after the Indian government banned the export of onions to Bangladesh in September that year.

To bring down the prices of onions and to keep it within the reach of common people, the Bangladesh government decided to import onions from a number of countries including China, Egypt, Myanmar, Pakistan, Singapore, Turkey and Uzbekistan. An important lesson from the price hike of onion for Bangladesh is that depending solely on only one country (in case of Bangladesh, this is India) for importing any essential item of the common people is always a mistake and a risky business and enhancing bilateral economic relations with neighbouring countries is must to curb the price of essentials.

Potential of a Pakistan-Bangladesh FTA

It is very pertinent to ask, can enhancing Bangladesh-Pakistan trade relations be mutually beneficial for both nations?

Currently, Bangladesh's volume of exports to Pakistan is very small. According to latest data from the UN Comtrade, it was as small as $72 million in 2018, which is just 0.2 percent of her total exports. Bangladesh's import from Pakistan is small as well. In 2018, imports from Pakistan were about $784 million, or just 1.30 percent of Bangladesh's overall imports and from the Pakistan side, it is 3.3 percent of Pakistan's overall exports. Thus, Bangladesh has become one of the top ten destinations for exports of Pakistan. For the last three years, exports from Pakistan to Bangladesh have been increasing significantly.

As of now, trade between the two countries is concentrated on a very few items. Textile fibre, paper yarn and woven fabrics of paper yarn account for over 60 percent of Bangladesh's total exports to Pakistan. Other major export items are: tobacco, cotton, apparel and clothing accessories, inorganic chemicals, paper and plastics. As regard imports, intermediate goods, especially textiles and clothing, constitute nearly 90 percent of Bangladesh's imports from Pakistan. However, some

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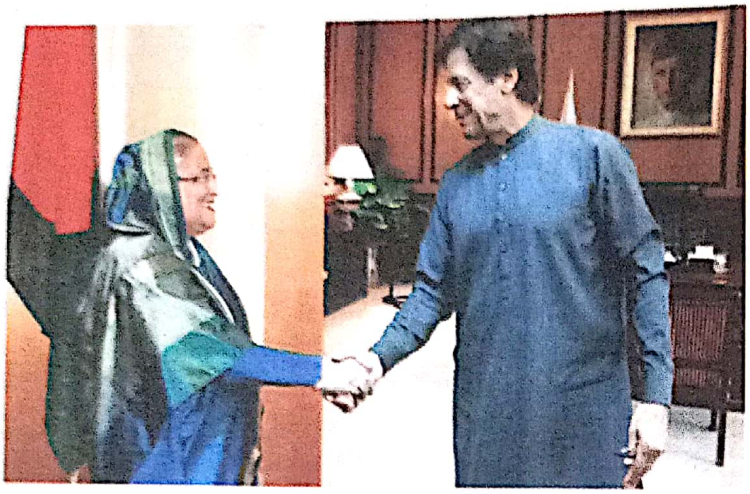
new products have been introduced recently such as cement, raw material, onions, ladies' suits, transport vehicles etc. Also, the imports of dates and chemicals have increased in the year 2019.

From the preceding discussion, it is obvious that the volume of trade between these two countries is very small. It is also worth noting that Bangladesh has always had a deficit trade balance with Pakistan. However, the recent rise of bilateral trade between the two countries indicates that the potentials of bilateral trade is fully unexplored



yet. To enhance trade relationships, based on the opinion of experts, the business community and the general public, in a 2006 study, Dr Ayubur Rahman Bhuyan, a former professor of economics at Dhaka University, stated that Bangladesh should sign a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Pakistan despite this uneven trade balance because Bangladesh has little to lose but much to gain from the FTA.

In the context of Pakistan-Bangladesh economic ties, it is said that Pakistan's eagerness for cooperation with Bangladesh is positive. The economic relationship between the two countries can surely go on. Cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan certainly has a more popular image in Bangladesh in comparison to his predecessors and if his regime really wants stronger relations with Bangladesh based on common aspirations for regional peace, prosperity and development, the bilateral relations between the two countries can also eventually see a positive change in the years to come.

For this to happen, immediate priority for the governments of both countries may be to study the feasibility of signing an FTA through holding frequent meetings and discussions between the experts and policymakers of both nations. It is strongly recommended that a meaningful economic relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh should be seen as part of strengthening economic cooperation in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) regionally and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) globally among Muslim countries. As long as Pakistan and Bangladesh are trading with each other, certainly a pragmatic approach would be trying to reach the utmost potential of this economic relationship.

Conclusion

The reconciliation process between the two countries, indubitably, is a welcome step. There is a dire need for policy shifts by both governments to resolve the old issues in an expeditious manner to meet new challenges posed by the emerging world order. Both governments should formulate a policy plan to overcome the economic conditions in the way of people-to-people contacts. If they can forget about the past for a better future, both governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan may come together to show the world that we were together, are together and will always be together.

South Asia in Transition

Since the partition of 47, South Asia has been going through ups and downs on the grounds of suppression and freedom. Yet, presently, the region is in transition, now more than ever. It is the tragedy of history perhaps that, as the proverb goes, history teaches mankind but not everyone takes lessons from history. Outwardly, India, the big brother, often called so by the media due to their superiority complex, is the tragic character at present which is facing one of the biggest crises with its neighbours alongside their broken economy and other alarming public issues. China, having borders with several South Asian countries and a partner of many mega projects, is taking as much benefit as it can out of it.

India used to dominate solely in South Asia due to its highly invested in military, its economic and foreign ties with most countries in the world compared to other peers, and crucial border lines among the neighbouring countries. But, recently, that has changed. Their controversial public policies such as Hindutva with extreme nationalism has ignited instability in the region and created xenophobia through communal discrimination, eventually disturbing the interfaith harmony in the entirety of South Asia.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's call to his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina is, certainly, a testament to this transition and is signalling the light at the end of the tunnel of the long-term closed relationship between the two countries. This recent humble gesture of the Pakistani PM perhaps touched the heart of Bangladeshi citizens positively. Now is the time for the two countries to move forward towards better, cordial relations.

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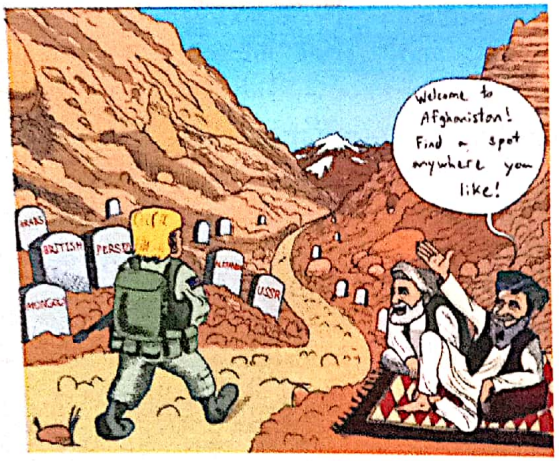
We are not makers of history, we are made by history

Moeiz Ali Jaffery

A recently-released picture of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo standing with Taliban's deputy political chief, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, is reminiscent of the photo that came out on 16 June 1986 from the Oval Office in which Ronald Reagon, the then President of the United States, and freedom fighters from Afghanistan (Mujahideen) met. After 34 years, the interests of the countries such as the USA, Pakistan and Afghanistan are, once again, aligned.

During Reagan's reign, the Taliban were declared freedom fighters as the US wanted to use them as a tool against the then-mighty Soviet Union. President Reagan played a masterstroke and put his administration's weight behind the mujahideen. He also provided financial support and helped them with weapons and training provided through Pakistan. Who could have imagined that the Taliban, who had enjoyed US support in their jihad, would one day stand against it?



Many years ago, when the second phase of the Cold War started, the USSR, which had ideological differences with the US and was considered its rival, invaded Afghanistan. Pursuing its own interest, the United States managed Pakistan's strategic help and found a group of Afghans (Taliban) who would fight against the USSR. The US declared them mujahideen, as they stood against foreign (Russian) invasion of their homeland. Pakistan also played its role in depicting this politico-ideological war between the USA and USSR as jihad.

However, the situation changed after the fateful incident of 9/11 and the ensuing war on terror; these freedom fighters were declared terrorists in what can be called a huge U-turn in US foreign policy. This U-turn backfired, especially for Pakistan, as Taliban guerillas launched attacks on and in the country when it aligned with the United States in this war. But, after almost 20 years of war, the Taliban have proven their resilience as in spite of spending trillion of dollars, the United States has nothing which it can sell to the American people as a victory in Afghanistan. The incumbent Trump administration was so desparate to get out of the so-called 'graveyard of empires' that when Imran Khan took over as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, President Trump wrote, in Dec 2018, a letter wherein he sought Pakistani premier's help in bringing the Taliban on the negotiation table. Pakistan played its role very effectively, and the Taliban and US concluded an agreement titled "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America" in which both sides agreed to work jointly for the cause of Afghan peace.

In a nutshell, after years of turmoil, peace is being negotiated in Doha, Qatar. Pakistan has played a behind-the-scenes but crucial role in courting the Afghan Taliban for long-awaited intra-Afghan peace talks, aiming at political reconciliation and bringing an end to decades of violence in the war-stricken country. Now, it seems that the interests of the United States, Pakistan and Afghanistan have once again aligned. Given this situation, one can hope that Doha talks will bear fruit and bring much-needed peace to the war-ravaged Afghanistan.

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Shifting Sands

Ansar Hafeez

Pandemics, natural disasters and wars have a way of exposing fault lines and leaving a lasting legacy. So the world, still in the throes of Covid-19, is experiencing a time of upheaval. While it is too early to say if the displacement of one superpower by another will be hastened by this healthcare crisis of global reach, the flurry of diplomatic moves in recent months reflects inevitability about it. Pakistan should take note.

The most perplexing question of the times is whether the US can still reclaim its leadership mantle. For those who have long admired the resilience of the American political system, the deepening political divides there must be a painful thing to watch. The bungled coronavirus crisis response by a president intent on gas-lighting the public has made things worse. And American failure weighs on global recovery.

Can the US heal if there is a break from Trump? It seems unlikely. Heading into a tough re-election battle, Trump is appealing to racial grievances, more than he did in 2016. That over 40 percent of electorate still stands by him doesn't bode well for America returning to sanity even in case of a Trump defeat later this year. Besides, it isn't a foregone conclusion yet that Trump is going home. While polls indicate Joe Biden with a solid lead, recall that even Hillary Clinton was beating Trump two months before the 2016 election.

On the other hand, China is undergoing a period of diplomatic fragility. The main Western grievance is that being the origin of the coronavirus, China could have done more to arrest the spread. And then there is criticism on human rights. But China is still in a strong position to change minds. It is still a global factory. And expect a bit of vaccine diplomacy doing the trick in 2021. If China pioneers a safe and efficacious vaccine and makes it accessible to wider world, it may generate a large swathe of goodwill.

Also note that China's continued engagements with UN agencies like WHO as well as regional blocs like EU suggest that it is interested in preserving the multilateral order. That stance is sure to appeal countries that are on the way up on the basis of codified international rules. Even if Biden is elected US president, the diplomatic damage caused by Trump's America First platform will take years to reverse. Besides, take note that Biden is also talking about bringing supply-chains home. The world, which had got used to American leadership, will be sceptical of an America that is looking out for itself at the cost of others.

Meanwhile, the newfound bonhomie between UAE and Israel shows that realpolitik, not ideology, will drive the Middle Eastern politics for some time to come. Reportedly, even the Saudi crown prince had plans to shake hands with Israel PM on a secret visit to DC, though the visit had to be cancelled as details were leaked. In short, moral leadership is in short supply, and the freedoms for Palestine, or Kashmir for that matter, are nowhere prominent on the agenda.

Given the shifting sands overseas, Pakistan needs to re-evaluate its core foreign policy objectives, or get stuck in a contradictory spiral. All relationships bring their own kinds of challenges, but sage minds need to firmly decide as to where at the intersection of economy, geopolitics and ideology do Pakistan's core interests lie. It is still worth trying, but the delicate dance of balancing relations between China and US as two main benefactors may have already lost its rhythm.

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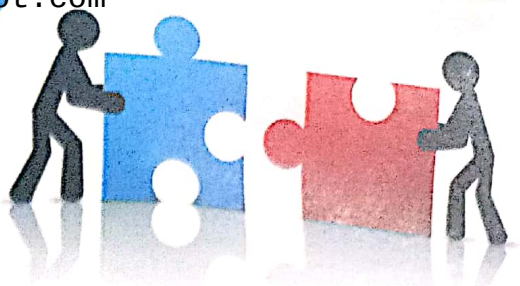
In foreign policy sphere, the term 'diplomacy' means the practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of states. It includes influencing the decisions and conduct of foreign officials and representatives through dialogue, negotiations and other non-violent means. In a nutshell, it is the chief instrument of foreign policy which represents the goals, objectives and strategies of the State in interactions with the rest of the world.

Changing Paradigms of Modern Diplomacy



Warda Batool

Although diplomacy is not a new practice, its nature, forms, scope and dimensions have been constantly changing with the passing of time. In ancient and middle ages, diplomacy was solely dependent on a state's wisdom, but in modern era, various regional and international agencies are also engaged in helping the states solve their problems and disputes.

Based mainly on the basis of the ancient Greek word "diploma," the modern term "diplomacy" has been derived from the French term 'diplomate'. Diplomat, or diplomatist in the 18th century, roughly meant 'an object folded in two". In the context, the word 'folded' has also varied implied meanings, e.g. some sort of official privileges, privacy or secrecy of the content, and these all later applied in international relations in terms of official documents and treaties and agreements between two governments. The earliest example of known diplomatic records is a letter of exchange between the pharaohs of the 18th dynasty of Egypt and the Amurru rulers of Canaan in the 14th century BC. Gradually, the practice of envoys, ambassadors and man with mission increased in later years, and became regular feature of statehood. It was also found in ancient Greek city-states where, on some occasions, envoys were sent to negotiate on issues such as war, peace and other commercial purposes, but there was no practice of posting of permanent representative.

The basic forms and customs of diplomacy that we see today were founded in middle and early modern periods. Its origin can be traced in the 13th-century northern Italy where the first embassy was established. Next to Italy was Tuscany and Venice where diplomacy began to flourish from the 14th century onwards. Even the tradition of handing over of credentials to the Head of the State was initiated in Italy. About the same time, this practice of diplomacy spread in other European countries like France and Spain. Spain was the first to send a permanent representative when it appointed an ambassador to the Court of St. James in 1487. From the 16th century, the tradition of permanent missions became customary. However, most rules of diplomacy were developed between 1500 and 1700, and state representatives took the rank of ambassador and several norms and qualifications were framed for their appointment. In early modern period, the tradition of having dedicated foreign ministries began to establish in all European countries to help and coordinate the working of ambassadors and their staff. By the 18th century, it became common in Europe and Russia, but it all disrupted with the French Revolution and the war in subsequent years. After the fall of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna established the international system of diplomacy which elaborated further in coming years, decades and centuries.

During the modern and post-modern times, the profession of diplomacy has become more complicated than earlier due to varied methods and kinds. As diplomats enjoy several immunities on foreign lands, they are expected to work simultaneously as a diplomat and a spy, especially after Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961, which formalized all rights of a diplomat. Now a diplomat is allowed to carry documents without any search and if (s)he commits a serious crime, (s)he can only be declared as *'persona non grata'* or unwanted person, and tried for the crime in his/her homeland. Over the time, many processes and procedures have been developed for handling diplomatic issues and disputes. Among these the main are: arbitration and mediation, conferences, negotiations, diplomatic recognition and backdoor diplomacy. In this context, there is a huge difference between the diplomacy by a superpower and that of a developing country or a small nation. In most cases, the interests of a powerful nation dominate, proving the proverb 'might is right'.

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FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND PAKISTAN

Take it as an opportunity

Mujahid Mustaqeem

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is not the future; it is already taking place with wide connectivity through the internet, the advent of Programmable Logic Controllers, and the use of robots in industrial manufacture.

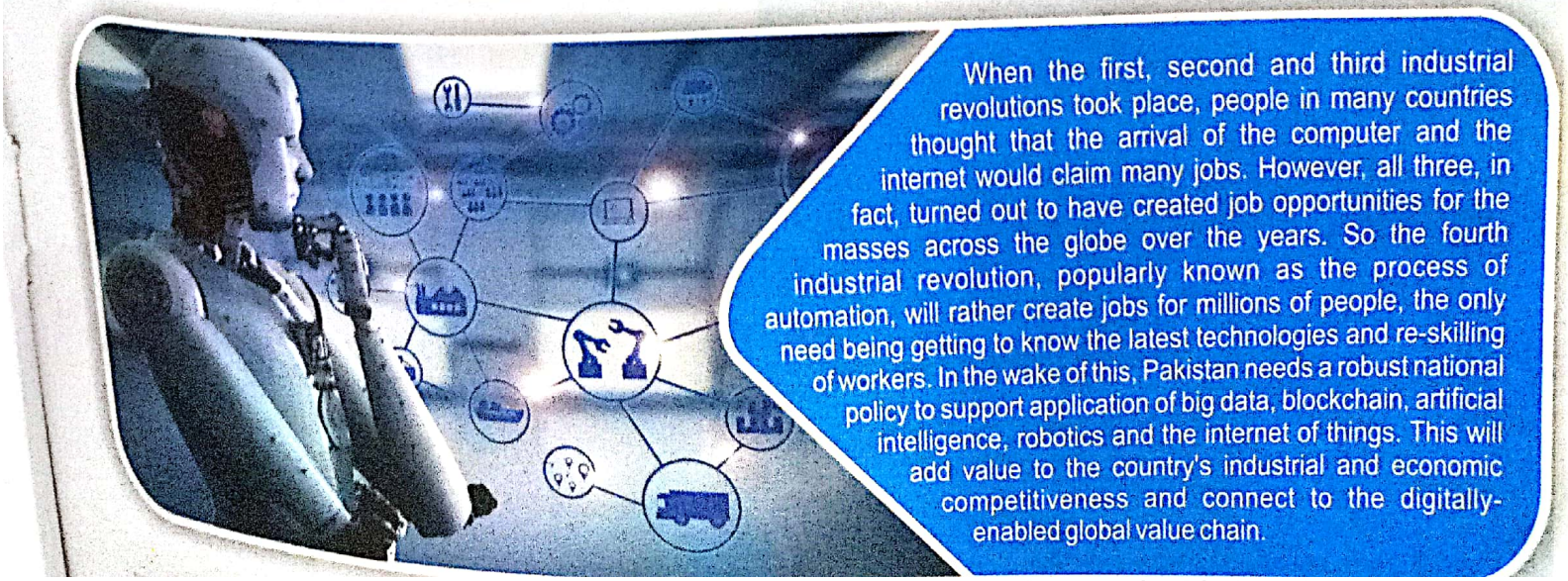
There is no question that the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) will bring massive upheaval to people everywhere, and its promise of massive productivity improvements has business and government leaders salivating in anticipation. They expect that huge capital investments will garner even larger returns—and it seems that they are correct. Executives, shareholders and politicians rejoice but the majority of the people impacted have little input.

And now with the 4IR looming, both parties must deal with the implications of their broken relationship. Business leaders are tempted to implement massive automation upgrades through robots, artificial intelligence (AI), and the internet of things (IoT) technologies, but are concerned about how to practically get it done.

Part of that concern stems from the need to put those technologies into spaces physically occupied by the very same employees they intend to eliminate—what reason do these people have to cooperate with these initiatives?

Rather than cooperating, the workforce entrenches itself against management by threatening work stoppages, passively resisting by failing to follow instructions, or even actively sabotaging new projects.

Both sides find themselves facing the need to adapt and overcome, or risk fading away as other organizations overtake them. What is to be done?



When the first, second and third industrial revolutions took place, people in many countries thought that the arrival of the computer and the internet would claim many jobs. However, all three, in fact, turned out to have created job opportunities for the masses across the globe over the years. So the fourth industrial revolution, popularly known as the process of automation, will rather create jobs for millions of people, the only need being getting to know the latest technologies and re-skilling of workers. In the wake of this, Pakistan needs a robust national policy to support application of big data, blockchain, artificial intelligence, robotics and the internet of things. This will add value to the country's industrial and economic competitiveness and connect to the digitally-enabled global value chain.

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Two things must be accomplished for the world to realize the full potential of a new industrial revolution. There must be a good working relationship between business leaders and their working-class employees. Much reconciliation is needed in most large organizations but new, emerging ones must make this a priority as well. Second, technology upgrades must actually be implemented. There are many theoretical use cases and a limited number of success stories available now. But transitioning from what is theoretically possible, and things that have been done on a limited basis, into scalable technologies that are feasible to implement, is a big task.

Who, then, are the people we should look to as leaders in this process? Which group is best equipped to lead the way?

Clearly, cooperation is a prerequisite to success, but each group has an area of expertise and responsibility that it must focus on. Neither will be successful in its area without the other and the entire project will bog down, and possibly fail completely, if just one piece of the process breaks down.

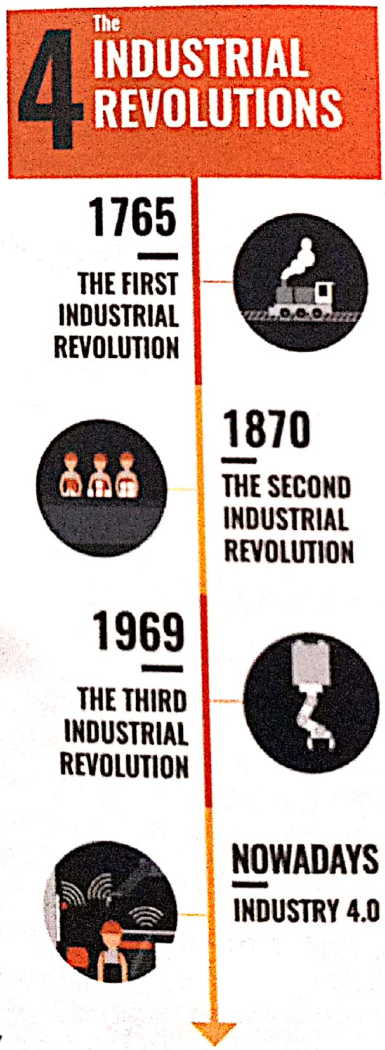
The hostile relationship between the two parties is the more foundational issue and must be seen as a pre-eminent one. Because the business leaders hold power, it must be they who accept leadership in improving the situation.

Excellent leadership by those in power begins with taking a genuine interest in those under their charge—choosing to bring good to them insofar as they are able to sustainably do so.

This represents a significant departure from how most executives see their industrial workers and will take serious effort on the part of the managers to change their thinking and habits in this area.

The obvious solutions that have typically been presented in scenarios like this are for executives to give their workforce more wages, breaks, holiday time, benefits, etc, but those are very poor places to start, and are often not even possible, as when a business is already strapped for cash or other resources. But the real issue is that they miss the heart of the problem, namely that workers see managers and executives as disinterested and possibly downright hostile towards them.

Business leaders must genuinely choose to care for their workforce and take definitive steps to re-train their thought patterns and habits until they routinely and automatically make the good of their workforce a key ingredient in every decision they make.



If any positive relationship is to be maintained for the long term, this must be done regardless of whether the workforce has done anything special to earn such goodwill from the management.

Certainly, employees who are counterproductive or toxic to the workplace culture must be removed, but managers should show patience in light of the relational context they find themselves in.

Often the best workers are the ones who are most taken advantage of, so managers must make special efforts to identify these employees and promote their well-being.

When workers realize that their interests are being cared for by their leaders, they become free to make a choice of their own: Do they continue to fight for every scrap of personal benefit they can get out of their employer? Or do they respond with generosity and choose to look for ways to bring good to their company through their own hard work and creativity?

Certainly, the company hopes that they choose the latter path but the workforce, too, stands to benefit from this option. The community of workers will find their workplace to be a far more pleasant place when everyone is looking out for the good of everyone else.

Friendship, loyalty and creativity will naturally result—things that everyone enjoys but also things whose natural side effects include business success.

So, as long as they receive the support of management, the workforce will eventually choose the latter path. Although change may take some time, as long as management remains committed to the good of the workforce, the culture will change for the better. As the workforce's attitude changes, they will begin experimenting with ideas they believe will benefit the organization. They must be given the freedom to try (and possibly fail with) new ideas. The point of focus should be that they learn to exercise their creativity for the company's benefit.

Managers must exercise wisdom in how much freedom individual employees are given with these new ideas so as to limit the risk they expose the organization to while the workers learn to appropriately exercise their new freedoms.

As they become effective in independently implementing new ideas, the workforce will naturally want to improve their processes as much as possible.

Managers will discover that the workers actually desire to improve the number of goods produced per worker, and simple improvements will eventually give way to more

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complex solutions as the company gets better at its tasks. The workforce will eventually be leading the effort to implement robots, AI, etc. The surprising result when a business achieves this kind of cohesiveness is that it actually creates many more jobs than it eliminates. It achieves higher productivity, higher profits and happier employees, clients and shareholders. The specific jobs are never "safe" because the workers are always looking to improve how they do business, but the employment of the workers is as safe as it can be because their business is so successful and their management cares about them.

As technology continues to advance at breakneck speed, we are tempted to focus wholly on how to harness the advances to get what we want. But to focus on the self is a sure path to misery, as is well-documented in philosophy and religion throughout human history.

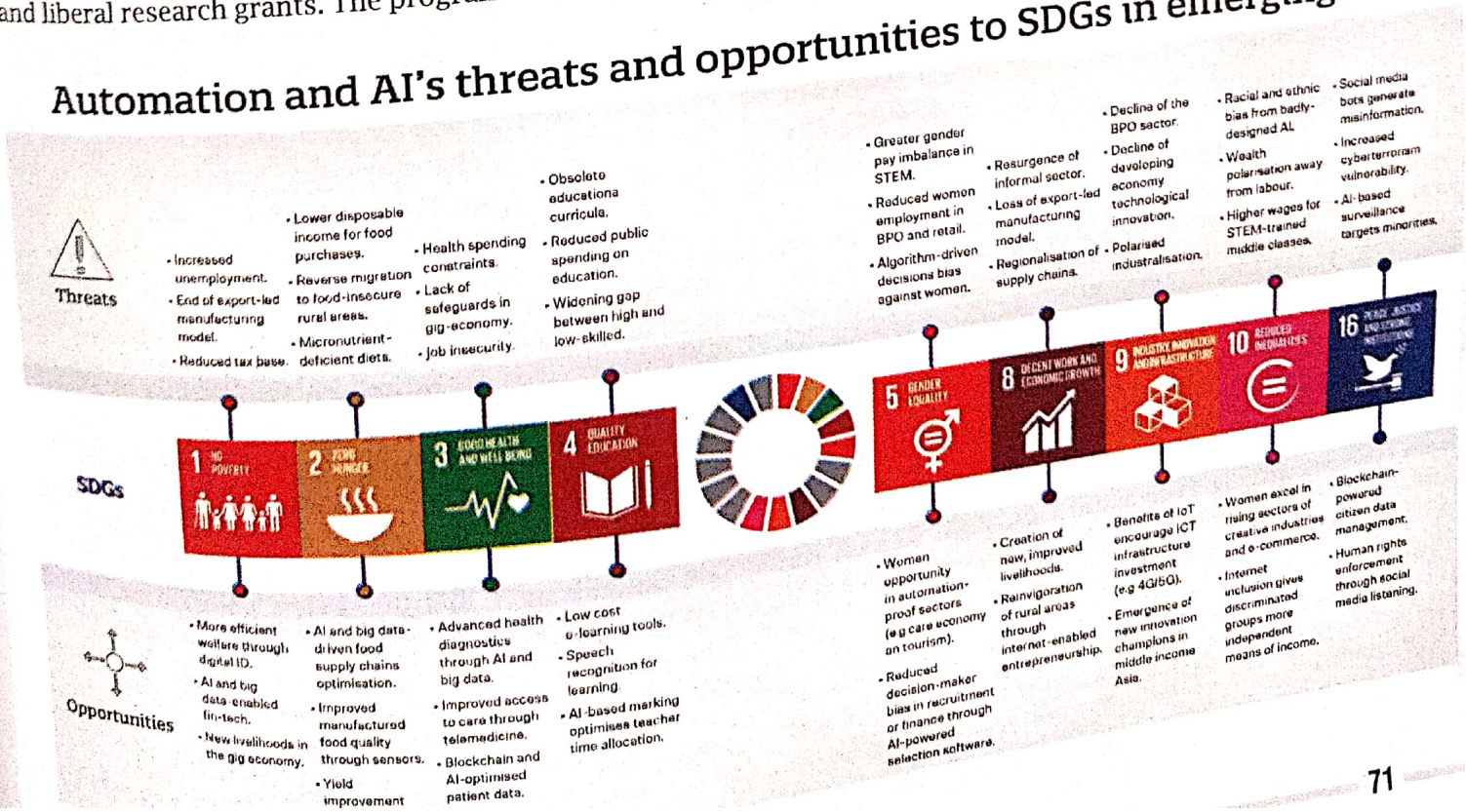
The 4IR is already bringing upheaval to society and much more is certainly in store for us, but it can be a great force for good if we commit ourselves to be the servants of our fellow people.

How Pakistan can benefit?

Noted educationist and former chairman of the HEC, Dr Atta-ur-Rahman, suggests the following way forward for Pakistan in his article 'Road to National Reconstruction'.

1. We must declare a national education emergency and completely overhaul our education systems that are in a huge mess.
2. We need to uplift our science institutions by training at least 70,000 PhDs in leading universities abroad and attract them back to Pakistan with revival of the performance-based tenure and track system of salaries and liberal research grants. The programme of establishing a network of foreign universities in Pakistan should be revived so that our students could obtain top-quality higher education.
3. Innovation and entrepreneurship should be promoted by establishing a large Venture Capital Fund for new start-ups, establishing technology parks and business incubators and offering long-term tax holidays for industrial manufacture and export of high technology products.
4. We need to encourage private sector Research and Development as it has been the key to success of the developed countries and emerging economies where it has grown rapidly. About 70 percent of R&D expenditure in China comes from the private sector. It is about 75 percent in Korea, about 70 percent in Germany and about 68 percent in the US. However, it is less than one percent in Pakistan.
5. We need to change the system of governance. A presidential system of democracy is far more suited for Pakistan as there is a much better separation of powers between the three key arms of the governance system, the legislature (parliament), the executive (government ministries and departments) and the judiciary.
6. Completely reform justice system to make it one that delivers justice within 20 days of a case being filed. If we employ 2,000 judges on contract who are given crystal clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to decide at least 10 cases each month, then 200,000 cases can be decided in the lower courts annually. A similar strategy can be adopted in higher courts. All that is needed is the determination to do this and some funding so that the system can be completely revamped.

Automation and AI's threats and opportunities to SDGs in emerging Asia


Threats
• Increased unemployment.
• End of export-led manufacturing model.
• Reduced tax base.
• Lower disposable income for food purchases.
• Reverse migration to food-insecure rural areas.
• Micronutrient-deficient diets.
• Health spending constraints.
• Lack of safeguards in gig-economy.
• Job insecurity.
• Obsolete educationa curricula.
• Reduced public spending on education.
• Widening gap between high and low-skilled.
• Greater gender pay imbalance in STEM.
• Reduced women employment in BPO and retail.
• Algorithm-driven decisions bias against women.
• Resurgence of informal sector.
• Loss of export-led manufacturing model.
• Regionalisation of supply chains.
• Decline of the BPO sector.
• Decline of developing economy technological innovation.
• Polarised industrialisation.
• Racial and ethnic bias from badly-designed AI.
• Wealth polarisation away from labour.
• Higher wages for STEM-trained middle classes.
• Social media bots generate misinformation.
• Increased cyberterrorism vulnerability.
• AI-based surveillance targets minorities.
SDGs
1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
Opportunities
• More efficient welfare through digital ID.
• AI and big data-enabled fin-tech.
• New livelihoods in the gig economy.
• AI and big data-driven food supply chains optimisation.
• Improved manufactured food quality through sensors.
• Yield improvement
• Advanced health diagnostics through AI and big data.
• Improved access to care through telemedicine.
• Blockchain and AI-optimised patient data.
• Low cost e-learning tools.
• Speech recognition for learning.
• AI-based marking optimises teacher time allocation.
• Women opportunity in automation-proof sectors (e.g care economy an tourism).
• Reduced decision-maker bias in recruitment or finance through AI-powered selection software.
• Creation of new, improved livelihoods.
• Reinvigoration of rural areas through internet-enabled entrepreneurship.
• Benefits of IoT encourage ICT infrastructure investment (e.g 4G/5G).
• Emergence of new innovation champions in middle income Asia.
• Women excel in rising sectors of creative industries and e-commerce.
• Internet inclusion gives discriminated groups more independent means of income.
• Blockchain-powered citizen data management.
• Human rights enforcement through social media listening.

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Convergence or Divergence

Intra-Afghan Dialogue at a Decisive Point

Mairaj ul Hamid Nasri

Saturday, September 12, 2020, will be considered a momentous day in the history of the world, especially that of the United States and Afghanistan, and South Asia for that matter. It was the historic day when the Afghan government and the Taliban began peace talks in the Qatari capital of Doha to end the decades-long war on the Afghan soil. The inaugural session was attended by high-level dignitaries of international community including US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Amb. Zalmay Khalilzad, and other officials from, and representatives of, countries including China, Pakistan, India, Norway, Germany, Spain, Finland, Japan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Turkey. The Kabul negotiating team comprised 21 members including 5 females and was led by Dr Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation while Taliban team was led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the co-founder of Taliban and a former Guantanamo Bay detainee.

The second session was held on Tuesday, September 15, for further deliberations on the subject. They discussed the agenda and protocol prepared by their respective working groups but the session ended without any fruitful conclusion. Contact groups from both sides were formed for coordination and contact by the negotiating teams. An agenda comprising 21 articles for future roadmap of the negotiations was set which was later reduced to 19.

In American scheme of things, both sides are expected to agree on an agreement as soon as possible. The political settlement with the Taliban was sine qua non for USA's face-saving and respectful withdrawal from Afghanistan while apparently achieving 'set goals' during this era. In his famous 2017 speech, US President Donald Trump outlined three key areas that need to be addressed carefully for withdrawal from Afghanistan. These were: "an honorable and enduring outcome worthy of the tremendous sacrifices that have been made," "a hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum for terrorists, including ISIS and Al Qaeda" and the security threats "in Afghanistan and the broader region are immense". So, after long discussions and talks in this backdrop, the peace deal was signed between Taliban and the United States on February 29, 2020.

This deal paved the way for intra-Afghan dialogue that has now started in Doha under the auspices of the United States. Afghans are now supposed to decide for their future, whether they opt for peaceful coexistence and get rid of 40-year-long destructive war or go back to the times of civil war and once again turn Afghanistan into a theatre of bloodshed and destruction.

It seems very easy to conclude the results of the process but those who are privy to the political history of Afghanistan and deeply observe developments in the country know that it's not a job to be completed in the near future; rather, it's very difficult to bring all the stakeholders in Afghanistan on one page and if it is done through same old means, no one can guarantee that the parties will hold up to their promises. Since almost everything has been ruined by the prolonged war in Afghanistan, the mindset of Afghans should also change accordingly and they must avoid prolonging the war further. Instead, they should opt for a peaceful coexistence and focus on the points of convergence instead of pinning out the points for creating divergence. Dr Abdullah's group and Taliban are traditional

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rivals in Afghanistan, and they have fought bloody battles against each other but the time has changed now, and their interests have also changed. Time is ripe for coming together and opting for peaceful coexistence for the sake of lives of over 30 million Afghans.

The presence of high-level representatives of key regional players in the Doha session depicts their interest in political settlement. India's role in Afghanistan and its approach towards Taliban is apparently right but its activities inside Afghanistan are otherwise. Amb. Khalilzad's visit to New Delhi on September 15, 2020, indicates that the US wants India to be ready for playing a constructive role in the success of intra-Afghan dialogue. But, it is known to all that India is following Chanakya's Mandala theory which says: "Your neighbour is your natural enemy and the neighbour's neighbour is your friend." India has, thus, made all-out efforts to use Afghanistan against Pakistan time and again. But, at present, since the US wants to withdraw from Afghanistan, India has been intimated to be passive at least during this process. Amb. Khalilzad visited Islamabad the next day and reiterated that the intra-Afghan dialogue would not have been possible without Pakistan's support—an acknowledgement of Pakistan's sacrifices and services for restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Moreover, the internal challenges faced by the Doha talks are also worsening. Taliban have continued their attacks; even First Vice President Amrullah Saleh was targeted in an assassination attempt—luckily he escaped the attack unharmed. This erodes the confidence of general public in Taliban. On the other side, Taliban, too, blame Kabul government for launching operations against their ground forces and commanders and claim that the attacks on Afghan forces are actually in retaliation to such actions of Dr Ghani administration.

So, given the precariousness and fluidity of the situation, both the sides need to be cautious and take confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the presence of credible guarantors during the process. There is no denying the fact that the status-quo protagonists will try to prolong the process employing various tactics—such elements in Ashraf Ghani administration make the lame excuses that they are an elected government and all must respect the mandate of the government. Nonetheless, the world knows better about the legitimacy of the mandate and of the incumbent government for that matter. On the other hand, if the Taliban demand for restoration of their previous government of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan that was toppled on October 12, 2001, it will also widen the gap between the negotiating parties. Thus, opting for sacrificing some of their core demands and coming together through points of convergence and avoiding points of divergence will prove to be the master key to the success of the whole process. The spoilers should also be watched keenly as one negative comment or news may derail the whole process as was done back in July 2015 by announcing the death of Mullah Omer which derailed the Murree Peace Talks. The guarantors should have open, vigilant eyes for looking into the matters deeply, and consider the ground realities as well in the case of the negotiating parties. The aim should be achieving and restoring long-term stability and prosperity in Afghanistan for which the smaller interests may be sacrificed by looking into the matters as visionary and patriotic leaders and representatives.

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Intra-AfghanDialogue

The US-Taliban agreement in February this year outlined the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan by May 2021 in exchange for peace guarantees and Taliban promised to open negotiations with the Afghan government, which the group had previously refused. For this purpose, the Afghan government and the Taliban have begun historic peace talks aimed at ending decades-long war.

What are the talks about?

The first round remained largely administrative, leading to further rounds to broker a comprehensive peace deal to end the fighting. Negotiators will aim to set an agenda and may look for a ceasefire. A number of thorny issues will be addressed later. Key challenges for later rounds are: How to include the Taliban, who have vehemently opposed the legitimacy of the Kabul government, in any governing arrangement, and how to safeguard the rights of women and minorities who suffered under the previous Taliban rule.

Who is negotiating?

While US and Qatari officials helped kick off the talks, negotiations will be between the Taliban and Afghan government teams, with Washington and other international powers helping to shepherd the process.

The Taliban team is headed by Abdul Hakim Haqqani, the Taliban's former shadow chief justice, who also heads its powerful council of religious scholars whereas the Afghan government delegation is led by Masoom Stanekzai, a former chief of National Directorate of Security (NDS).

Why Doha?

Doha, the capital of the small Gulf Arab state of Qatar, is well-established neutral ground for the long-warring parties far from their conflict back home. It is where the US-Taliban agreement was negotiated and is the site of the Taliban's Political Office, opened in 2012. The initial round of the talks has been scheduled for Doha, but further rounds could be moved to another country, possibly in Europe.

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Pakistan's Enduring Governance Challenges

Asadullah Noonari

In the circles of political analysts, veterans and observers, it is an established fact that good governance is of great significance to the well-being of a country's people. The stark difference between good and bad governance was aptly depicted by a noted Italian painter, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, in his 14th-century famous frescoes. One part of the frescoes pictures good governance; a beautiful city where justice and freedom reign supreme, where men are working, some are ploughing and others cultivating vine. Children are playing and young women dancing. On the contrary, the part of frescoes show a tyrant on a throne and justice lying tied up on the ground. None is working, no cultivated fields; the only activity is raping women and killing men. Moreover, in the past two decades or so, empirical and theoretical evidence have rendered a new insight into the concept of governance. It implies that the quality of governance and institutions determines the broader socioeconomic progress and distribution of the gains of growth. The benefits of economic policies, however efficacious or benign they may be, cannot be dispersed widely unless the institutions interceding these policies are vibrant, effective and efficient. Governance, as a whole, transcends the institutions, rules and practices that provide incentives and set the limits.

In the case of Pakistan, we see that the country has been stuck in a quagmire of weak governance due to repeated disruptions and derailment of governmental functioning. Provision of basic amenities to the people of the country has been greatly hampered due to inept and inefficient governance. Weak state institutions, rampant

It is the quality and the features of governance that determine the extent of peace and stability and prospects of economic development in a country. The word governance is derived from the Greek word *'kubernaein'*, meaning steering or piloting. It was also used by Plato concerning how to design a realm of rule. In contemporary political literature, the term 'governance' has gained currency after it was first coined by the World Bank in 1980s in its development reports. Since then, it has evolved from a narrow definition used by the World Bank as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources" to the broader definition as "the sum of the many ways in which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs" as adopted by the Commission on Global Governance. So, governance, today, refers to something broader than a government. Though there is no consensus on its conceptual framework, it is an agreed upon fact that it rests on the principles of justice, freedom, equality and accountability.

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corruption, poor democratic dispensation, centralized power structure and a lax tax system lie at the heart of the problem.

Nevertheless, Pakistan has shown improvement in the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) Report, 2017, developed by the World Bank, in all the six dimensions of governance. These include political stability and absence of violence, voice and accountability, regulatory quality, government effectiveness, rule of law and control of corruption.

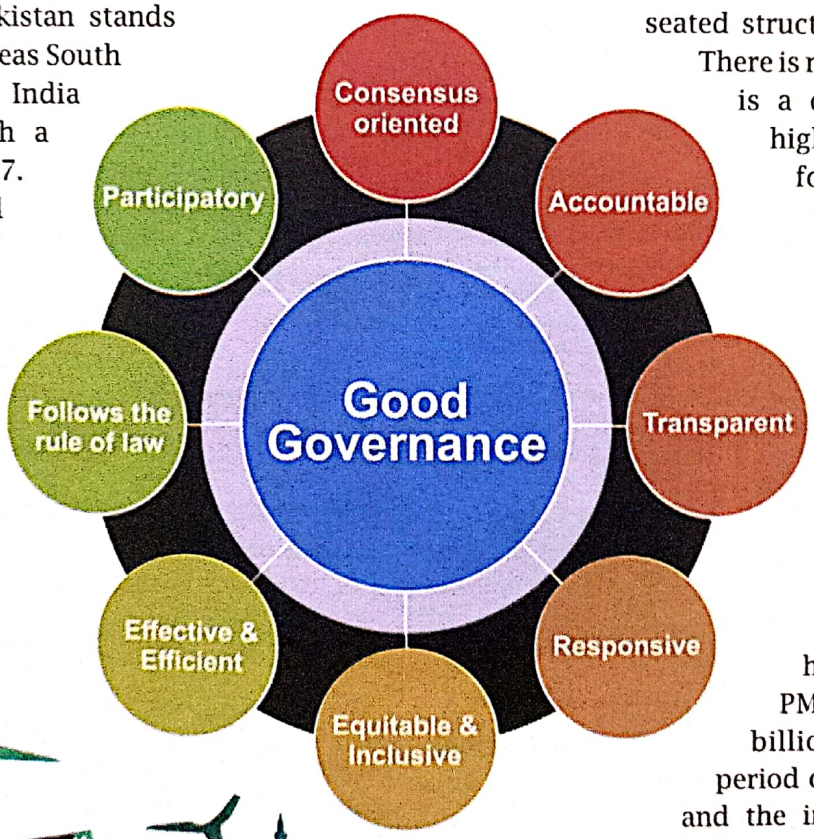
Improvement in above six indicators is relative to previously recorded data in 2008 and 2012. However, the performance is quite poor if compared to the South Asian mean and other countries in the region. Sri Lanka and India have regularly outperformed Pakistan by considerable margins. For instance, in 'government effectiveness' indicator, Pakistan stands at a dismal 31 percent, whereas South Asian average is 41 and India leading the region with a percentage ranking of 57. Besides, Pakistan showed below-average performance in other indicators as well.

Unfortunately, chronic political instability and prevailing oligarchy-dominated politics have become the biggest obstacle to the evolution of modern governance. Eventually, it has resulted in adopting short-term policies and a narrow approach towards the issues which demand years in their execution and implementation. Today's mounting water and energy shortages are the outcomes of negligence of past governments, for instance. Consequently, the governance challenges have multiplied and intensified, embroiling the country in an abysmal state of poor governance.

Following are some of the biggest enduring governance challenges the country faces.

Firstly, economic governance has deteriorated to the point where the economy has lurched from one financial crisis to the next in the last few decades. At the top of the issue are unaddressed structural problems in the economy and poor management of public finances—the problems that poor governance and bad management have further exacerbated. The implications are evident in the shape of macroeconomic instability, growing unemployment, high inflation, deteriorating debt profile, poor public services, widespread corruption, crippling power outages, soaring poverty and criminal neglect of the social sector.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey, average annual growth rates remained 6.8% in 1960s, and 4.8%, 6.5%, 4.6% in 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, respectively; whereas, in the last decade, the annual average growth rate was 4.9%. This volatile growth exposes the deep-seated structural flaws in the economy. There is no denying the fact that there is a direct correlation between higher GDP growth rate and foreign financial inflows. It is what Pakistan experienced in the interlude of martial laws.



Poor governance is also exemplified by recurrent 'loan waivers'. A total of Rs 403 billion were written off by different governments between 1997 and 2009, causing a colossal loss to public exchequer. It did not stop here, the last government of PML-N waived off Rs 280 billion in bank loans over a period of three years, i.e. 2013-15, and the incumbent PTI government has written off Rs 300 billion in the last year alone. Moreover, country's tax-to-GDP ratio has slipped to around 11% in the last two fiscals, from 13% in the year 2017-18. The fundamental reasons behind this inconsistent performance are the ad-hoc policies and high dependence on foreign assistance.

Secondly, centralized governance has abandoned the institutional capacity to deliver at the grassroots level. Local bodies, which make the third tier of governance structure, have been neglected. Pakistan's governance structure has been based upon two tiers, federal and provincial, historically. This is in spite of the fact that the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan has ensured permanent existence of local bodies in the

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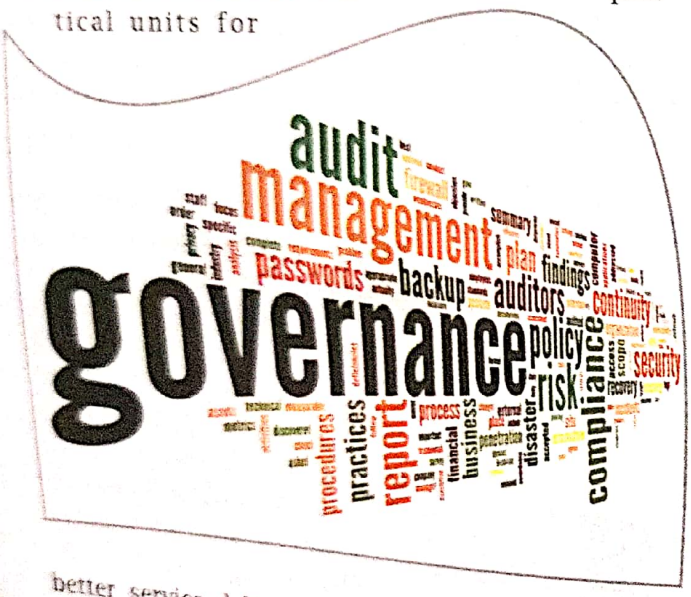
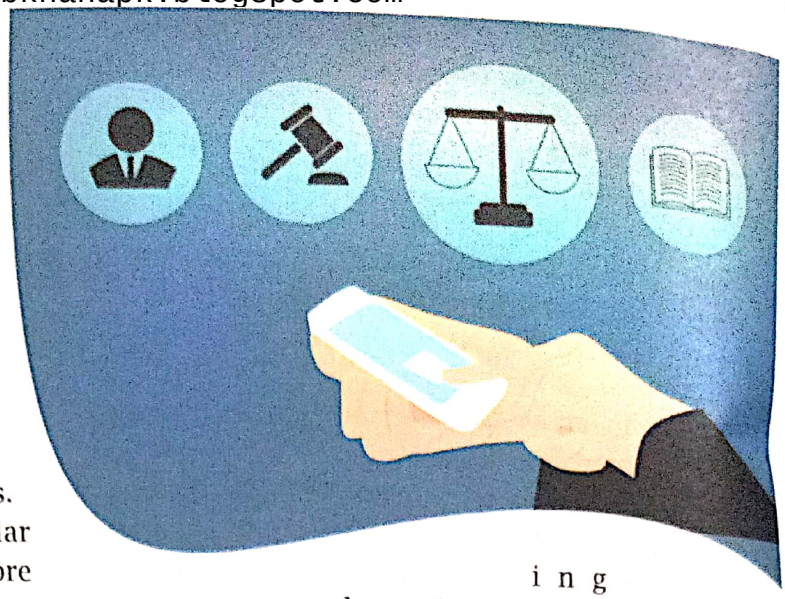
country's governance structure under Article 140-A of the constitution which states, "Each Province shall, by law, establish a local government system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility, and authority to the elected representatives of the local governments." Local bodies have been put in a cold storage. Frequent changes in Local Government Acts by all provincial governments have brought the functioning of this imperative tier to a standstill. Provincial governments, with the exception of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, have even failed to establish Provincial Finance Commissions to divide the resources among provincial and district governments. Ironically, it reveals the contradictions of popular rhetoric of decentralization; provinces demanding more powers from the federal concurrent list while ceasing to devolve the rightful functions to their district governments. Nonetheless, it is inevitable to share the powers to smaller administrative and political units for better service delivery to common man and good governance at large.



Thirdly, fragile institutional governance has posed many challenges. Almost all the key public-sector institutions such as PIA, Pakistan Railways, Wapda and Pakistan Steel Mills suffer from multiple problems; political interference, over-managing, widespread corruption, mismanagement and nepotism in appointments are rampant. As a result, the budget of almost 20 percent of all the total tax revenue every year has to be set aside in order to meet recurring losses of, or make up for subsidies given to, those enterprises. It was confirmed by the government on 5th June, when it told the Senate that total accumulated losses of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) had surpassed the annual defence spending.

Fourthly and finally, current education governance has posed serious challenges to the country. Pakistan ranks 113th out of 120 countries in the Education Development Index of UNESCO. Its literacy rate stands at 57% (including those who could only write their names), well behind its neighbours. It has also the world's second highest population of out-of-school children. The total annual average expenditure of public sector education is barely 2 percent and the problem is compounded by weak governance, insufficient trained teachers and their absenteeism. Moreover, prevailing education sector is stratified in three parallel streams; public-run schools, private schools and madrasas, each having its own curriculum and examination conduct. Its consequences have been well summed up in the National Internal Security Policy 2014-18 which says: "Serious cleavages have appeared in the society as a result of these systems, and continued existence in parallel spheres compounds the possibilities of violence among divided youth."



The history of Pakistan confirms the validity of empirical evidence and theoretical literature about governance in developing countries. The cost of centralization of power and political instability Pakistan had to pay has been in the form of poor governance and institutional decay. Nevertheless, the country has shown flexibility when it comes to national agenda; from 18th amendment to NFC to merger of Fata with KP. It has also been successful in establishing vibrant institutions like SBP, National Highways and Motorway Police, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, and so on.

Countries with strong institutions, decentralized governance structure and policies based on long-term planning prosper by ensuring delivery of basic services. The governance standards can be ameliorated through the internationally established best practices, historical experiences and various characteristics peculiar to the situation of Pakistan.

The author is a candidate of BS in the department of Government and Public Policy at National Defence University, Islamabad.

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DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN PAKISTAN

The issue of governance has gained more prominence and relevance due to the emerging challenges arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting the whole gamut of life. To tackle such disasters, governments world over have developed disaster management bodies from the central government right down to the community level. Pakistan has also had its share of disasters in the last at least 14 years in the form of insurgency and terrorism, earthquakes, floods and internally-displaced persons (IDPs). The people of Pakistan have always demonstrated resilience while coping with such problems but the efficacy and flaws in the operations of disaster management at various tiers also surfaced during such times. As disaster management has a deep correlation with overall governance, it should, therefore, be analysed from that perspective.

Hassaan Bin Zubair

Disaster management is the systematic process of using administrative directives, organization and operational skills and capacities to reduce the risk of natural or manmade disasters and their adverse effects. Disaster management can be realized at various levels; sub-national (local, regional), national and international, as well as at various times before, during, and after the disaster. International disaster management can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, it is the management of international disasters affecting several countries, e.g. tsunamis, floods, droughts, hurricanes, epidemics or wars. The term describes international assistance to national (regional or local) disaster management. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) introduced the paradigm shift from a reactive to a proactive approach in the form of the Hyogo Framework of Action (2005-2015) signed by 168 countries including Pakistan.

Under the UNISDR, Pakistan modelled its proactive Disaster Management by enacting the National Disaster Management Act 2010 that establishes three tiers for disaster management system: national, provincial and district. The National Disaster Management Commission (NDMC) is composed of the Prime Minister, Leaders of the Opposition in the Senate and the National Assembly, some cabinet ministers, chief ministers, and the Chairman NDMA, amongst others at the national level, with the responsibility of laying down policies and guidelines for disaster risk management and approval of the National Plan.

The NDMA, in line with the NDMA Act, 2010, serves as the implementing, coordinating and monitoring body at the national level. It has also developed a framework under the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) which provides guidelines for disaster risk management

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at national, provincial and district levels. The NDMA also claims to have formulated a response plan (NDRP) in 2010 outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in dealing with emergencies. Similarly, a National Disaster Management Plan was conceived with a total investment of $1,040.9 million with its main components being human resource development, multi-hazard early-warning system plan and instructors' guidelines on community-based disaster risk management.

Experts believe that due to geophysical risks, extreme climatic conditions, and high degrees of vulnerability, Pakistan is located in a disaster-prone region. Hydrometeorological, biological and geophysical hazards such as cyclones, avalanches, storms, floods, droughts, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), landslides, earthquakes and epidemics are threats for the Pakistani nation. Some of these dangers (e.g. landslides, floods, etc.)

are mainly recurrent and occur almost annually whereas other risks such as earthquakes are infrequent but potentially extremely damaging. In addition to natural hazards, manmade disasters also impend for the Pakistani society, environment and economy. This heightens the importance of having a robust disaster management system in Pakistan.

There is no denying the fact that the best disaster management practices lead to lasting solutions to natural calamities and create resilience among the communities. It is due to this fact that Pakistan has a number of organizations to deal with disasters. At present, the agencies that are responsible for disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation are the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), and the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) at the ground level.

1. The NDMA is mandated to develop policy guidelines and frameworks addressing preparedness, relief, rehabilitation, and recovery from disasters.
2. The PDMA is responsible for implementing policies and plans for disaster management in the respective province, capacity building of lines departments, and coordinating with the districts; and
3. DDMA headed by the Deputy Commissioner with the membership of select lines departments is responsible for developing and implementing district-level preparedness, plans and coordination.

When it comes to addressing the needs of high-risk groups during disasters, the NDMA has an excellent set of National Policy Guidelines developed by its Gender and Child Cell (GCC). The framework formulated in 2014 suggests the need to:

- Mainstream gender in disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation.
- Develop disaster preparedness plans in consultation with key stakeholders with special attention to vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.
- The framework acknowledges that women and children are prone to experience physical and sexual violence due to their vulnerable position in our societies and the need for integrated referral systems as well as psycho-social support to address this.
- The framework specifies the need to develop interventions that meet the needs of vulnerable groups and safeguard equitable access, benefits and relief responses of these groups. Local examples of successful interventions include spaces friendly to women and children.
- The framework also suggests working with existing social protection programmes like BISP (now EHSAS).
- Developing information systems that are

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1. The average age of a mother and her 6 children is 12 years which is reduced by 5 years if the age of the mother is excluded. How old is she?
(a) 42 (b) 46
(c) 48 (d) 50

2. The average of 5 numbers is 27. If one number is excluded, the average becomes 25. The excluded number is:
(a) 25 (b) 30
(c) 35 (d) 40

3. Three years ago, the average age of A and B was 18 years. With C joining them, the average age becomes 22 years. How old is C now?
(a) 20 (b) 24
(c) 27 (d) 30

4. The average age of 36 students in a group is 14 years. When teacher's age is added, the average increases by 1. What is the teacher's age in years?
(a) 31 (b) 36
(c) 41 (d) 51

5. The average of a non-zero number and its square is 5 times the number. The number is:
(a) 9 (b) 17
(c) 25 (d) 29

6. The average score of a batsman in 10 innings was 32. How many runs must he make in his next innings so as to increase his average by 4?
(d) 2 (b) 14
(c) 54 (d) 76

7. The mean of 50 observations was 36. It was found later that an observation 48 was wrongly taken as 23. The corrected new mean is:
(a) 35.2 (b) 36.5
(c) 37.1 (d) 40.1

8. The average of 20 numbers is zero. Of them, at the most, how many may be greater than zero?
(a) 0 (b) 1
(c) 10 (d) 19

9. The average salary of all the workers in a workshop is Rs. 8000. The average salary of 7 technicians is Rs. 12000 and that of the rest is Rs. 6000. The total number of workers in the workshop is:
(a) 20 (b) 21
(c) 22 (d) 23

10. Kamal obtained 76, 65, 82, 67 and 85 marks (out of 100) in English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, respectively. What are his average marks?
(a) 69 (b) 75
(c) 77 (d) 79

11. In the first 20 overs of a cricket game, the run rate was only 3.3. What should be the run rate in the remaining 30 overs to reach the target of 282 runs?
(a) 6.20 (b) 6.40
(c) 7.20 (d) 7.70

12. The average weight of a class of 24 students is 35 kg. If the weight of the teacher is included, the average rises by 400 g. The weight of the teacher is:
(a) 35 (b) 40
(c) 45 (d) 50

13. After replacing an old member by a new one, it was found that the average age of five members of a club is the same as it was 3 years ago. What is the difference between the ages of the replaced and the new member?
(a) 2 years (b) 4 years
(c) 11 years (d) 15 years

14. The average weight of 8 persons increases by 2.5 kg when a new person weighing 65 kg comes in place of one of them. What might be the weight of the new person?
(a) 76 kg (b) 76.5 kg
(c) 85 kg (d) 90 kg

15. In a school with 600 students, the average age of the boys is 12 years and that of the girls is 11 years. If the average age of the school is 11 years 9 months, then the number of girls in the school is:
(a) 150 (b) 200
(c) 250 (d) 300

16. The average age of Ali and Salma and their son 3 years ago was 27 years and that of Slama and the son 5 years. The present age of the Ali is:
(a) 35 (b) 38
(c) 40 (d) 50

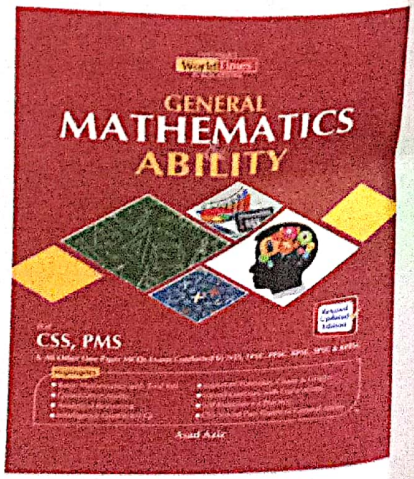
17. Find the average of all the numbers between 6 and 34 which are divisible by 5.
(a) 15 (b) 17
(c) 19 (d) 20

18. In the first 10 overs of a cricket game, the run rate was only 3.2. What should be the run rate in the remaining 40 overs to reach the target of 282 runs?
(a) 5.75 (b) 6.15
(c) 6.20 (d) 6.25
Explanation
Total run till 10 overs is = 3.2x10=32
Remaining runs = 282 - 32 = 250
250 runs to make in 40 overs
So, average runs per over = 250/40
The answer is: 6.25

19. The average of 11 results is 60. If average of first 6 results is 58 and that of the last 6 is 63, find the sixth result.
(a) 22 (b) 44
(c) 66 (d) 72

20. If the arithmetic mean of 75 numbers is calculated, it is 35. If each number is increased by 5, then mean of new numbers is:
(a) 40 (b) 50
(c) 50 (d) 55

The author teaches General Ability at World Times Institute.



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M. Sheraz

The pay and pension bill is going to haunt Pakistan's economic managers in years to come, as it is becoming another monster just like circular debt. Federal pension payments have been growing at 18% a year, while provincial pension liabilities have been growing even faster. Such abnormal growth is taking a heavy toll on the development budget — the voters' share. All other budget heads, whether salaries, defence, debt or markup payments, are quite inflexible. It's the development budget that is likely to get squashed as pension payments balloon further. The annual pension payments by federal and provincial governments and state-owned enterprises are now touching a trillion rupees a year.

In 2015-16, the total budgeted pension allocation for military was 174.2 billion rupees and 56.7 billion rupees for civilians, in 2017-18,180 billion rupees was budgeted for military pensions (with revised estimates of 253 billion rupees) and 67.8 billion rupees for civilians revised upward to 80 billion rupees, and last year pensions as per revised estimates to the military rose to 354.9 billion rupees while for civilians it was 108.4 billion rupees. Thus in four years (2015-16 to 2019-20) military pensions rose by 103 percent while civilian pensions rose by 91 percent. During a cabinet meeting on 18 August, the Prime Minister reportedly stated that the issue of pensions is more serious than the issue of energy sector circular debt, adding that the government is paying 470 billion rupees on account of pensions – an amount equal to what the government pays as salaries to government employees.

The existing government pension system of Pakistan is fragmented, non-transparent, understudied and without any underpinning asset base. Federal government, provincial governments, armed forces of Pakistan, autonomous bodies and other government agencies are throwing forward the pension liability without any plan on how to meet the growing burden.

The government pension liability and the systemic underpinning need a comprehensive overhaul urgently. But, how can the government continue to pay pension without pain?

Pension is pegged with the base salary, without any employee

Among many crises left unattended by successive governments in Pakistan, the one that one hardly hears about is the pension crisis. The fast-emerging "pension crisis" is feared to explode if the present system is not reformed and revised. As official figures suggest, the pension burden on the national exchequer has crossed the trillion-rupee mark—about 15 percent of the budget. Huge unfunded pension liabilities of the government pose a serious fiscal challenge. But it does not mean that the government should stop paying pensions. On the contrary, the government pensions should be made more secure and fiscally sustainable. Encouragingly, Prime Minister Imran Khan has expressed his resolve to address the pension issue. It is the first time the issue of pension has found a space on the national policy radar and caught the sitting PM's attention.

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"The government is paying Rs470 billion on account of pensions [to former government employees or their spouses]. This amount is almost equal to the amount that we pay to the existing government employees as salaries [Rs500 billion]. At many universities, the amount spent on paying pensions has increased more than spending on salaries. The problem must be streamlined even if we have to hire the world's top consultant for it." — PM Imran Khan

contributions and after retirement, payouts are made from the budget. No one knows the amount of the government's already accrued pension liabilities, owed to existing employees and pensioners through these pay-as-you-go pension schemes.

Many countries meticulously estimate their unfunded pension liabilities and some even account for them in their debt-to-GDP ratio. While it is difficult to calculate Pakistan's total pension liabilities, without a detailed actuarial study across the federal and provincial governments, a guesstimate can be made. Punjab last had an actuarial valuation done in 2015, putting its unfunded accrued pension liability at Rs3.8 trillion — 34 times the province's Rs112 billion pension expenditure. If that is taken as a benchmark, our overall pension liability can touch Rs33-34 trillion. This is as high as the total central government debt of Rs34 trillion.

There is a need to immediately cap these massive unfunded pension liabilities at their present level, by terminating this scheme for any future government employees. From here on, the government should follow different models for existing employees and pensioners versus the future employees. If somehow, all these pensions could be transitioned to a contributory scheme, it could very well save the government at least Rs500 billion a year, assuming 50% contribution by employees. This money can, then, be made available for development that can get politicians some votes.

Many public sector employees today will be pensioners of tomorrow, when the government will be forced to make unilateral cuts. Those cuts are going to be much more bitter than the modest contributions that have to be made today. And to sweeten the deal, the government

could introduce a one-time increment to make the contributions more palatable.

For new employees, the government should introduce a fully-funded contributory scheme. Every month, the employees and the government should both make contributions, which should then be invested through a well-structured pension fund. The post-retirement payouts have to move away from defined benefit and should instead be linked with the contributions made.

India has successfully implemented such a model. Civil servants contribute 10% of their salary, which is matched by the central government. The proceeds of the fund are invested. When civil servants reach 60 years of age, 40% or more of the account balance is used to purchase an annuity policy, while the remainder is withdrawn as a lumpsum amount or as phased withdrawals till the age of 70, at which point the pensioners exit from the system. The pension fund is managed by the National Pension System Trust for the central government, but 26 state governments have also joined hands.

For existing employees and pensioners, any unilateral change in the pension structure would be politically very difficult. Therefore, the government should start from

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revising the elaborate three-generational eligibility structure, encourage a culture of contributions by starting with mandatory but modest deductions for the pension fund, offer incentives to employees

Pension for 100 years!

A government servant qualifies for post-retirement pension after 25 years of service. It continues till the pensioner's death and is then converted into family pension for the heirs. Under the Punjab Pension Rules, the family pension goes to the widow of the deceased. After the death of the widow, it can be claimed by the surviving sons not above 24 years of age, unmarried or eldest widowed daughter, or even by the eldest widow of the deceased son of the pensioner. If or when no qualifying person from the second generation remains, the family pension is then paid to the eldest surviving son or the unmarried or widowed daughter of the deceased son of the pensioner.

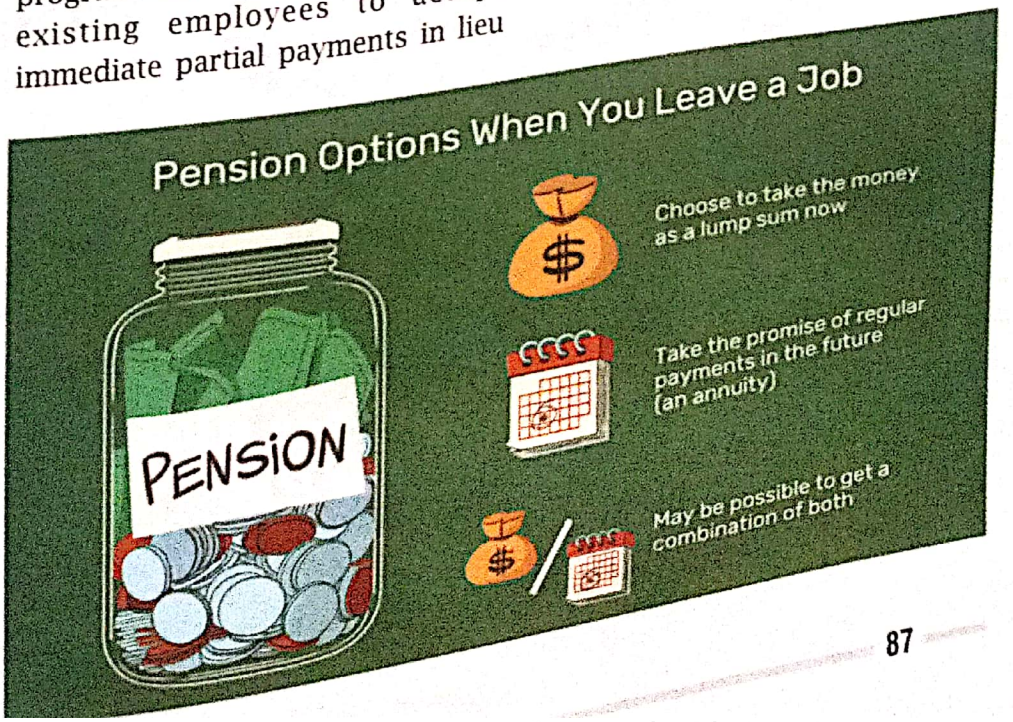
These preposterous rules are not specific to Punjab and are prevalent across all provinces with some variations. Our government, that last year had to borrow even to service the interest cost on its debts, let alone to pay back the loans or even run the government, takes care of its employees through such a generous pension scheme that spans three generations, and possibly more than a century. Let it sink in.

The total pension liabilities of the federal and provincial governments last year claimed a quarter of revenues collected by FBR. This year the cumulative annual pension payments are touching a trillion rupees. These pension liabilities are over and above the huge pension payments in various state-owned enterprises. Besides the sheer size, what is really frightening is the pace at which the pensions are growing. This abnormal growth is because of multiple reasons. Firstly, the duration of pension payments for an employee or his family is way longer than years of his service and can be 1.5 to four times as high. This means that the number of entrants in the pension scheme is many times higher than the rate of exit. The ever-expanding size of the government is also massively adding to the government pension liabilities. And if this is not enough, higher life expectancy has also pushed up the pension longevity and this trend is expected to continue.

to voluntarily opt for the new contributory pension scheme and start making budgetary allocations for future pension payments.

The government may consider additional measures to take the pension liabilities off budget. For instance, the government can earmark unproductive assets for sale or lease, transfer them to the pension fund, and match their duration with the pension liabilities. A similar model was tried by the French Pensions Reserve Fund, which received a significant portion of its seed equity from the privatisation of government assets. Other innovative measures could include buyout programmes, offering options to existing employees to accept immediate partial payments in lieu of full future benefits. This model was tried in Illinois, United States, where payments typically amounted to 60–70% of the market value of employee pension.

The pension bomb is ticking, and it is only a matter of time before it explodes. If it is not defused soon enough, the state may find itself in a quandary of who should it pay — its employees, pensioners or the citizens. There is just not going to be enough for all three to claim a share. The pension liabilities are ballooning at a rapid pace, squeezing the development space fast. The long-overdue pension reforms are no more an option but a fiscal necessity and the sooner the government realises this, the better.


Pension Options When You Leave a Job
PENSION
Choose to take the money as a lump sum now
Take the promise of regular payments in the future (an annuity)
May be possible to get a combination of both

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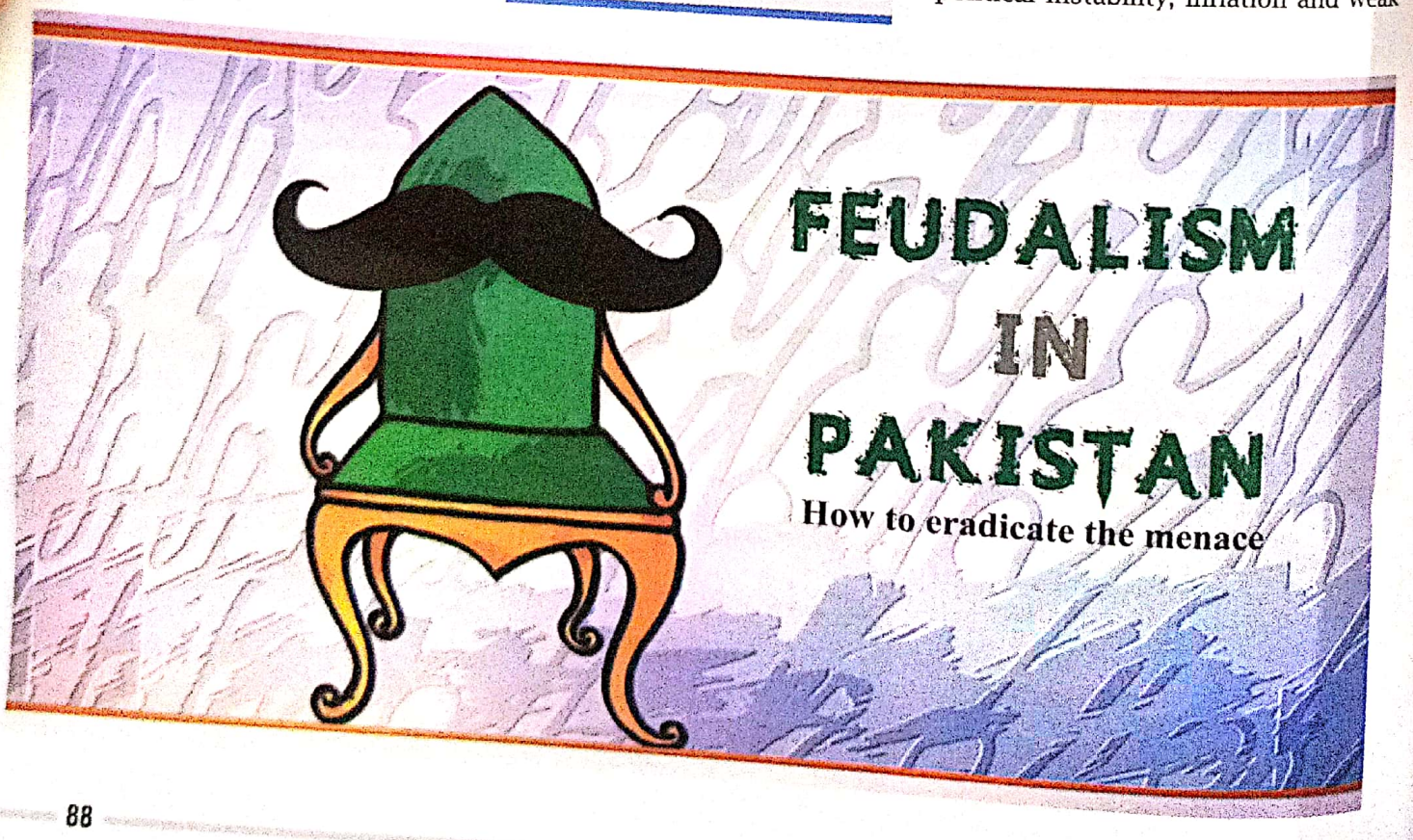
Amjad Ali

FEUDALISM IN PAKISTAN

How to eradicate the menace



Feudal system is, undoubtedly, deeply rooted in Pakistani society, especially in rural Sindh, southern Punjab and certain parts of Balochistan. In our society, there are two extremes; one side lives in the height of depravity and misery whereas the other relishes in luxury and extravagance. So gloomy! But, this is what we actually witness and experience everyday.

Since a huge chunk of income of the British colonizers in the Indian Subcontinent came from land, they, for this purpose, had introduced *Zamindari*, *Mahalwari* and *Ryotwari* systems here.

1. Zimindari system

This system was introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1793, through Permanent Settlement Act, in Bihar, Orissa, Benaras and Bengal. In this system of land regulation, the landlord—the person who was awarded a piece of land by the British—was solely in charge of revenue collection. The amount they collected would be divided into 11 parts; 1/11 of the share belonging to the Zamindar and the remaining to the East India Company. The British administration had no direct dealings with the peasants.

Feudal system has almost disappeared from the face of the earth, but it still exists in Pakistan. The feudal lords are the prominent members of our society. The culture in the feudal lordship system is diametrically opposed to the Islamic norms and values, and democracy. Feudalism, in the case of Pakistan, is a system comprising landlords who own large swathes of land, hundreds and even thousands of acres of land. Simply put, it means thousands of acres of land in the hands of only a few. This system, indeed, hinders progress and abolishes social integration, which is pivotal for the structure of the society.

2. Rytowri system

The Ryotwari system was introduced by Thomas Munro in 1820 mainly in the South Indian region, in modern Indian states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and others. In this system, the British awarded peasants the ownership of their land, making this a system of peasant-proprietorship. Hence, all revenue collection was made directly from the peasants who worked on and owned the land they cultivated.

3. The Mahalwari system

It was introduced in 1833 during the period of William Bentinck in the western part of Subcontinent — Central Province, North-West Frontier Province Agra, Punjab, Gangetic Valley — and areas making up the modern-day Pakistan. This system was based on village groups; the land was granted to prominent members in the village for cultivation.

Although the British colonizers have left, this parasitic curse still exists here for the exploitation of lower stratum of society. This system is the real impediment to development; it brings political instability, inflation and weak

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governance. To make Pakistan great politically and economically, this cancerous cell must be removed. Until the eradication of this system, we, as a nation, cannot imagine prosperous economy and a truly functional justice system in Pakistan.

Feudal system promotes two different cultures: culture of feudal impunity and culture of poverty. The former refers to a system in which the landlords go scot-free even after committing horrendous and heinous crimes, due to their overwhelming influence over police and judicial administration. The police usually don't register an FIR (First Information Report) against a *wadera* or a *chowdhry*. The puppet-like mullahs also are in their interest and, in certain scenarios, they concoct their own version of Islamic principles and norms. This culture has hijacked the minds of the people, especially in villages. So, the poor are unable to raise voice for their rights.

The latter, i.e. the culture of poverty, is a result of values and belief systems. People feel inferior and think for 'living for the present' only.

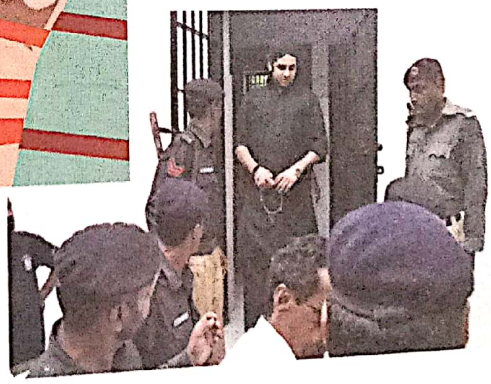
The words of the landlords are considered 'law'. These landlords keep their peasants uneducated. However, after decades of exploitation, peasants, especially the young generation, now really want to get rid of this cancerous system. But, they have failed in getting any tangible results as landlords are sitting in the legislatures where they make laws that help them control the 'undesirable behaviour' of the peasants. Patriotism, to them, means self-interest. This is perilous for the country and hazardous to social and national integration. To have a prosperous society, this sort of evil must be rooted out.

We the Pakistanis lag far behind even many developing countries in education, social integration and humanity, and this is only due to this feudal system which is the real anathema for socioeconomic development and political stability. Thus, it can be said that that stability, especially political, social justice and rule of law are the products of an egalitarian system.

The principal reason behind the strong feudalism in Pakistani society is that land reforms, one of the reasons of strong feudal culture, were not carried out sincerely. During Ayub era, these reforms were introduced but they were limited only to individuals rather than families. Bhutto's land reforms were also never implemented in letter and spirit.

Political power is also a major factor of strong feudalism. Our politicians are landlords who have, as mentioned earlier, a tremendous influence over judicial administrators, police and public. Through these institutions, the landlords facilitate their paths to provincial and national assemblies. "Democracy," as a popular definition goes, "is government of the people, for the people, by the people," but in the context of Pakistan, it is "of the feudals, for the feudals and by the feudals."

Last but not least, debt bondage gives muscularity to feudalism in our society. The posterity of the peasants is deprived of education by the landlords. Sadly, the tenants are born and die in poverty. The bondage of their debts ends with death only.



Feudalism hampers politico-economic development by creating a greater degree of psychological panic in the minds of the have-nots. It deprives the masses of health, education and even independent life, and invariably pressurizes and controls them. Ergo, they surrender their aims and ambitions in the lap of these 'monsters'. They put to end their dreams and ambitions of their kids for the sake of these landlords, who make life a 'living hell' for the peasants.

The panacea for the ill of feudalism is education, strong and sincere land reforms and strong governance. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should also play a great role in demolishing this parasitical system.

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Qasim Dhillon

In 2017, a research conducted in 33 countries revealed that Facebook-owned platforms reached 86 percent of their internet-users between the ages of 16 and 64. If not the internet itself, these platforms effectively acted as a gateway to the internet there. Today, by all means, outreach of social media is gargantuan. These platforms also provide a stage for democratic debates. However, early optimism about the potential of social media for providing unhindered access to information, and giving voice to those who were traditionally marginalized or censored, is eroding. Owing to its unregulated nature, a number of perils have attached with it. Vulnerability to political exploitation, spreading mis- and disinformation, facilitation for hate speech, targeted marginalization of minorities, exacerbating polarization of civil society, and unprecedented capturing of personal data are some manifest plagues. Nonetheless, there is also a bright side of the story. The same platforms do also provide global connectivity to people, offer access to information, ensure freedom of speech, and facilitate working from home or running businesses online. However, owing to the growing abuse of social media, concerted efforts from all concerned quarters to transform social media into a safer platform are need of the hour.

Being unregulated in nature, social media platforms are vulnerable to political exploitation, especially by populist leaders. The motivation behind this is the manipulation of voters' choices. Apart from populist leaders, established democratic governments have also spent public money to manipulate opinions over social media. This manipulation violates democratic norms and poses a grave threat to democracy.

Widespread 'disinformation' and 'misinformation' are adding fuel to the fire. In recent months, social media were littered with false information on Covid-19. Such information is created and disseminated by state s well as non-state actors to achieve their underlying motives. Although the use of false information to influence public opinion is as old as the newspaper—Ben Franklin used the tactic to generate opposition to Native Americans during the American Revolution—dynamics of media have changed now. Social media, today, act as accelerant, and at-scale content platforms and distribution channels. Due to their massive outreach, they have the capacity to harm the interests of a larger segment of society with false information that is circulated on them.

Another peril of social media is the facilitation of hate speech. SM platforms are often appreciated for their promise and power to promote free speech. It's true to the extent that they have facilitated people in repressive regimes to raise their voice and show their concerns. Arab Spring is a perfect example to prove the point. SM platforms have also allowed individuals to speak freely about issues like gender, representation and identity. However, it is also an undeniable reality that these platforms provide breeding ground for hate speech, public humiliation, racial discrimination and sexual harassment. For example, in Myanmar, a major chunk of the Facebook content is said to be divisive and hateful. Resultantly, minorities in Myanmar, especially Rohingya Muslims, are undergoing great torment.

Moreover, SM platforms are relentlessly used for targeted marginalization of disadvantaged or minority voices.

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demeaning 'hashtags' have become an organized mechanism to target a certain group. For example, #snowflake is used to denigrate liberals in America. Similarly, #Presstitutes is a commonly used slur in Philippines and India to troll those who speak unfavourably of the populist governments. Due to constant online abuse, members of frequently targeted groups, especially women and minorities, may self-censor or opt out of participating in public discourse. Presence of such content in abundance and absence of grievance-redressal mechanism can significantly change generally accepted norms pertaining to what is right and permissible.

Biased design of social media has also exacerbated polarization in society. There is no disagreement that whatever is visible to individuals in terms of search results, newsfeed and advertising offers is an outcome of their digital footprint. All this is controlled by the ever-evolving non-neutral algorithms of SM platforms. The user preferences are prioritized in a feedback loop. Subsequently, users are shown similar posts to reinforce their preferences. On platforms such as Facebook, this tends to promote self-segregation into like-minded groups. These groups then use all means, fair or unfair, to achieve supremacy over other groups. Resultantly, fissure among different strata of society is deepening.

Lastly, SM platforms are being actively used to capture personal data for behavioural profiling. This is unprecedented in nature. Today, SM companies' databases are replete with personal data of users. These data are strategically used for behavioural profiling and micro-targeting. Through this data, governments can secure support on political grounds from masses by influencing their political opinion. Similarly, businesses can bring interests of consumers in line with their products and services. Data analysis coupled with behavioural and demographic analysis has allowed firms—not just Google and Facebook, but reportedly also Cambridge Analytica—to "decode" users' personalities and target them with tailored messaging to drive behavioural shifts. However, despite all that, the picture is not as gloomy as it seems. SM platforms are simultaneously offering numerous benefits to masses. Today, we can interact with members of our family, relatives and friends who live thousands of miles away from us. Moreover, they also offer lucrative opportunities to earn money and show their talent. For instance, many talented youngsters are making bucks by uploading informative content on YouTube.

This shows that if positive and constructive use of social media is promoted, it may bring huge benefits; but there is also an urgent need to curb the negative use. The aforementioned perils require all concerned stakeholders to carve out an overarching policy to fix prevailing loopholes in SM design. Social media firms have a predominant role to play in this regard as it is they who are responsible for rectifying the errors. And, to do this, they must first improve the working of algorithm to make it neutral. Secondly, they should allocate sufficient resources to ensure community standards; equal priority should be given to formation of effective grievance-redressal mechanism. Thirdly, they must strictly adhere to self-generated industry standards to minimize the unintended consequences of SM technologies. Fourthly, social media firms can go into partnerships with institutions to find solutions to critical issues. In this regard, Facebook's decision to share information with the International Fact Checking Network and with Germany's Corrective to combat the spread of mis- and disinformation is appreciable. Lastly, SM platforms should also commit to greater transparency about how information is shared and targeted.

In a nutshell, the absence of appropriate regulations over social media is impairing its ability and potential to serve the masses in a positive way. Instances of negative use are rising with each passing day. Faltering democratic norms, increase in online or cyber crimes, adversity among different factions, misuse of private information and seclusion of marginalized groups are conspicuous. A responsible, inclusive and consecrated framework must be chalked out by all concerned quarters. This is the only way forward to reap the fruits associated with formidable power of social media.

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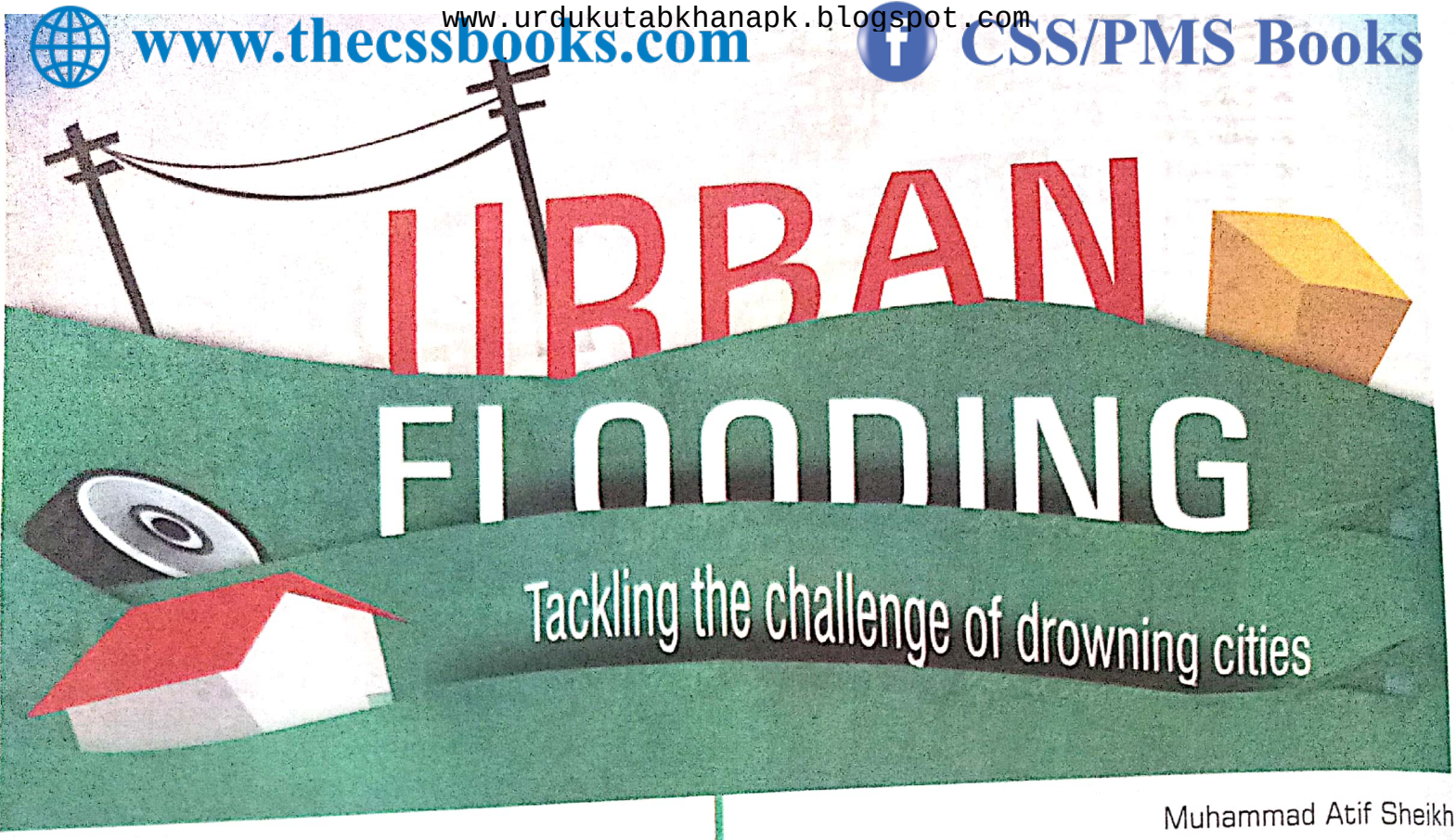

URBAN FLOODING

Tackling the challenge of drowning cities

Muhammad Atif Sheikh

It's morning time and there is a lot of hustle and bustle in the house; kids have to go to school and men to work, but the street outside is looking like a canal due to the heavy rain last night. Suddenly, a mobile phone bell rings; the person on the other side tells that the rainwater has entered your shop and warehouse. Upon hearing this, the head of the family gets worried. His condition deteriorates and he needs immediate treatment. But, reaching a hospital seems impossible as street is flooded with rainwater and not even a motorbike can be waded through, let alone a car.

There has been no electricity for the past two days due to heavy rain. The owner of a famous restaurant seems distressed as no customers could come to the restaurant due to inundated roads; even home delivery is not possible. In such a situation, how the edibles can be stored in freezers as the generator has run out of fuel and re-fuelling is not possible due to blocked roads.

There is 'operation day' in a famous hospital in the city. But, most surgeons and the auxiliary staff could not reach the hospital as the roads are clogged due to excessive rainwater.

A daily wager has to reach his workplace but there is no transport on the road due to urban flooding. He seems perplexed how he would arrange bread for his kids. Moreover, if he doesn't reach the workplace, his salary will be deducted.

Rain-caused electricity outages have interrupted the supply of drinking water to the city. Furthermore, due to outdated and dilapidated supply lines, rain- and sewer-age water is getting mixed with the clean water.

Although the rain has stopped, but the stagnant water hasn't been drained out yet due to which mosquitoes and other vectors of various diseases are now in abundance. Kids are catching ailments. Rainwater has been drained out yet mud and odour have inflicted misery to common people. Mud has dried and there is dust all around that has made breathing difficult.

These are some examples of the crises caused by urban flooding—a situation where the inundation of property is caused by rainfall on increased amounts of impervious surfaces and overwhelming the capacity of drainage systems. Whether it falls from the sky or springs from land, water makes its way. We find this natural phenome-non of water flow in the form of rivers, streams and other waterways. Moreover, humans can channel water to suit their needs with an apt use of technology and system. Even these systems are established keeping in view the natural flow of water. A glaring example of it is canals in

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rural areas and sewerage system in urban ones. And, when both these systems get filled to their capacity, or their natural flow gets disrupted, the excess water flows out and starts running downslope. Experts call this phenomenon "urban flooding." Such floods can hit both rural and urban areas and the major difference between the two types is that the flood in rural areas inundates vast swathes of land and affects mostly the poor people while the urban flooding results mainly due to poor drainage infrastructure because shrinking open spaces hamper the capacity of the soil to absorb water. So, when it pours down, the rainwater either submerges roads or enters the sewerage system. Heavy or torrential rains are the biggest cause of urban flooding. When the sewerage system is overfilled and is rendered unable to drain the rainwater out, it gets choked. In other words, it can be said that the urban flooding results when landscape of the city cannot absorb or otherwise manage rainfall.

A big example of this phenomenon is the city of Quetta. Karez once flowed around this beautiful city. The water from rainfall in Quetta and the surrounding hills flowed into these Karez, thus, keeping the city's water table intact. But, later, when Quetta started expanding and its inhabited areas reached the hills in the suburbs of the city, the land inside and in the suburbs of the city—found mainly in the form of Karez, gardens, fields and empty spaces—which once regulated the absorption and flow of water beneath the soil, got covered with built infrastructure, e.g. concrete houses, buildings, commercial plazas and roads. Resultantly, today, even a little rainfall causes inundation of roads and the city looks like an overflowed stream. Since the sewerage system in Quetta consists of open sewers that were made for a limited population, in case of a heavy rain, these sewers overflow, resulting in urban flooding. Hence, the water which once recharged the city's water table gets wasted.

Experts split the definition of urban flooding into three separate components: it is (1) caused by rain that (2) falls on impervious surfaces and (3) overwhelms local storm-water drainage capacity. This distribution points to three different factors: (1) heavy precipitation which is expected to become more frequent due to climate change, (2) increased urbanization and growing population of cities, and (3) insufficient or outdated stormwater infrastructure. Urban flooding sits at the intersection of all three.

Now, let's analyze these three factors separately in the context of Pakistan.

Climate change is a global trend and its effects are more profound on developing countries like Pakistan. Over-reliance on natural resources, limited technical capabilities and insufficient financial resources to cope with the climate change-induced changes render the country prone to multifarious dangers and threats. Pakistan makes a tiny contribution to total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, but it is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2020, Pakistan is fifth on the list of countries most affected by extreme weather events between 1999 and 2018. This is also substantiated by the figures presented by Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, as per which floods killed 7,301 people in Pakistan between 2001 and 2020, leaving 12,022 people injured, affecting 46,0545,90 people and rendering 18,155 homeless, besides causing a financial loss of more than US$ 18 billion. Experts believe that rising temperatures is one of the effects of climatic changes owing to which there is all likelihood that the frequency and intensity of rain will rise in the coming years. Devastating rains and frequent heat waves in Karachi bear testimony to this fact.

According to a research study by UK Government Office for Science, climate change is adding an impetus to migration from rural to urban areas and the trend is expected to continue in future as well. At present, cities are facing a dual threat; on one hand, they are facing the challenge of migration from rural to urban areas while climate change is also a looming danger for them, on the other. Coming threats will multiply current vulnerabilities because climate change and rapid urbanization will lead

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to more instances of urban flooding. Urbanization is a complex process as it involves political, environmental, demographic, economic and social factors. In Pakistan's context, when we view urbanization in the backdrop of environmental and socioeconomic factors, we find that climate change-induced depletion of water resources in most parts of the country is spurring this phenomenon. In addition, changing weather patterns and increasing intensity and longevity of seasons are having adverse impacts on agricultural produce as well.

The gap between expenses and incomes is also widening day by day due to which the provision of civic amenities has been affected. Employment opportunities and other such factors in rural and urban areas have left people with no option but to abandon agriculture as a profession and move to urban areas.

Although increase in urban population can be witnessed in all cities of the country, as many as 15 districts are, however, most affected from this pressure. Our urban population has increased by 32,548,000 people between 1998 and 2017 but almost 56% of that occurred in 15 districts including 6 Karachi districts and Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Peshawar, Multan, Hyderabad, Islamabad and Quetta.

Rapid urbanization is causing an unbridled growth and sprawl of cities which points to the expansion of the built infrastructure that will cause urban flooding. Urban development leads to destruction of ecological cover and impedes the natural flow of water. For instance, cemented roofs, paved streets and roads hamper the earth's capacity to absorb water due to which that water enters sewers and drains and when they are filled, water spills out. Hence, we find rainwater or floodwater inundating roads and streets. A research study suggests that 40% of water after rainfall on open spaces evaporates, 10% flows on the surface whereas 50% is absorbed by the earth to recharge the underground water table. On the other hand, in built areas, only 25% of such water evaporates, 30% gets absorbed by earth while 15% becomes part of the sewerage system; it means only 30% of water enters the natural drainage system. Hence, our drainage systems have to bear an additional 45% burden of wastewater. In case of more rains, this share also gets increased.

A recent study on effects of climate change of Norway's urban drainage system has found that if there is an increase of 20% in the rainfall, the ratio of urban flooding increases by 365% while the number of vulnerable buildings increases by 120%. However, when we look at Pakistan, we find that during the period between fifth and sixth population and housing censuses, i.e. in 1998 and 2017, the number of houses in the country's urban areas rose from 6.03 million to 12.19 million—an increase of 102%. At present, 58% of houses in urban areas are concentrated in 15 abovementioned districts only and the increase in those during the inter-census period was 78.71% while their population grew by 60.6%— growth in number of houses was more than that in population.

When urban population increases, available resources and basic infrastructure comes under pressure. To make up for the shortage of houses, lands on the peripheries of the cities are converted into housing schemes, leading also to construction of more built infrastructure, e.g. shopping plazas, shops, roads, schools, hospitals, marriage halls, worship places, petrol pumps, and so on. It means the soil gets more concrete cover. This also leads to higher prices

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of land which, ultimately, affects poop stratum of the society as they have no option but to build their abodes on illegally occupied land or areas that are prone to many hazards and risks. In many instances, such settlements have been made on natural waterways or drainage systems, effecting a decline in their drainage capacity. In this state of affairs, even a little rainfall sometimes becomes a colossal problem.

Although urban flooding is caused by some manmade factors, it represents the incapacity of our sewerage systems to drain water out in time. Our ineptness is manifested in sheer negligence in maintenance and repair as well as timely cleaning of an already dilapidated drainage infrastructure. An overwhelming part of this system is still in the form of open and closed sewers and ducts which usually overflow even if there is little rain.

Public also have limited access to drainage and waste management systems. Pakistan Social and Living Measurement Survey 2018-19 reports that 35% of households in Pakistan have no drainage facility, 22% are attached to underground sewerage system whereas 37% release wastewater in open and 5% in open sewers. In urban areas, 8% households have absolutely no sewerage facility, 50% release sewerage water in underground ducts, 32% in open sewers and 10 in closed ones. Owing to growing urban population, these systems have been overwhelmed. Our broken solid waste management system further adds insult to injury as 75% of houses in Pakistan have no access to such a system; this ratio is 41% in urban areas. Only 49% of urban houses have access to municipal services in this regard whereas 5% have hired people to do this task. The waster produced by houses that do not have access to a proper disposal system, throw it out on open spaces like streets, vacant plots, etc. polluting the environment continuously. According to a study by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the amount of solid waste generated in urban Pakistan is more than 55,000 tons per day, and waste collection in cities currently averages only 50% of waste generation. Similarly, a presentation titled as "Waste-to-Energy Potential on Pakistan" given before "Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Application of Waste-to-Energy in Asian Region," held in Busan, Korea, mentions that 71,000 tons of solid waste is generated per day in Pakistan, mostly from major metropolitan areas. It also mentions that about 60-70% of solid waste generated in the cities is collected. The remaining waste does go in our drainage system further hampering its ability to work properly.

Environmental and socio-economic impacts of urban flooding on individuals as well as the society are profound, and these may lead to a huge urban crisis. Since urban residents make an important part of a country's population owing to their civic and economic impact, urban flooding disrupts civic life, leading to social and economic losses. Cities are playing a critical role in our national economy as they share 78% of trade and commercial activities; the metropolitan city of Karachi singularly handles 95% of foreign trade and contributes 20% to the national GDP and 30% to the manufacturing sector. Lahore, the second biggest city of the country, contributes 13.2% to national economy while Faisalabad generates 25% of the national revenue. Water that stagnates after urban flooding causes the spread of garbage, human and industrial waste, and mud all around the city due to which seasonal diseases, e.g. malaria, dengue, cholera, diarrhoea, asthma, etc. break out, further burdening the health system of the country, and for that matter the national exchequer.

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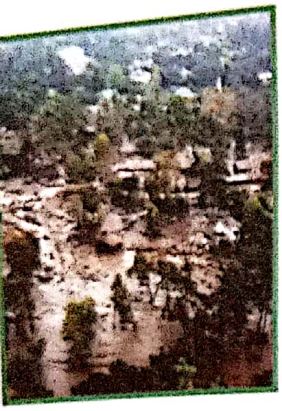
10 Horrifying Scientific Predictions

What is the future of humanity?

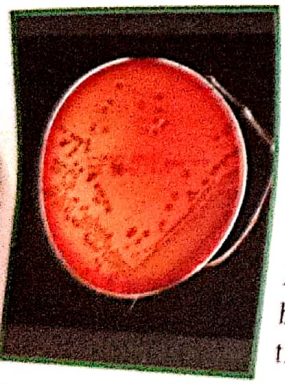
As for the accuracy of the information goes, none can beat scientific findings. They are the results of fact-finding research collected over countless person-hours and backed with evidence. Scientific predictions have for ages shaped out the outlook of the planet and the future of everything in it that is currently in the hands of human species. Scientific forecasts on the future of humanity are never good, and this is because humanity has proved over and over again how self-destructive they can be. In the blind pursuit of its preservation, humanity keeps destroying the same things upon which its survival hangs upon entirely. So, what are some of the most horrifying scientific predictions that have been made regarding the future of humanity? Let's find out!

M. Ali Jawad



1. Increasing climate change-induced natural disasters

Climate change has been an iron noose around humanity's neck for over a century now, and it does not show any signs of slowing down. According to scientists, the planet only has a little over a decade to change how energy is used to reduce the impact of climate change before it is too late. Once the tipping point is reached, then all hope of reversing the ravages of climate change will be impossible.



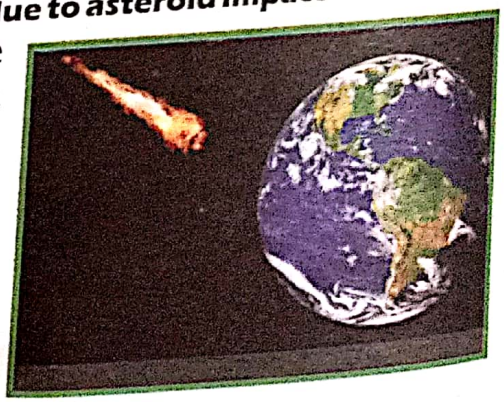
2. Pandemics becoming more frequent

The modern world has higher probabilities of pandemic outbreaks than ever before, couple that with how easy travelling has become; then you have yourself a ticking time bomb. Experts have warned that antibiotics are being rendered ineffective every year as viruses mutate, and they believe that by 2050 deaths caused by resistant pathogens will increase to 10 million a year compared to the current 700,000 annual deaths.

3. A global energy crisis

Since the consumption of fossil fuels has been on a non-stop full throttle for the last 200 years, researchers have predicted a global energy crisis that will be caused by the high demand for energy against a decline in coal and biofuel reserves. If this pace of consumption is sustained, oil reserves will completely run out in the next 50 years. Most of the current industries, including food production, will be rendered defunct.

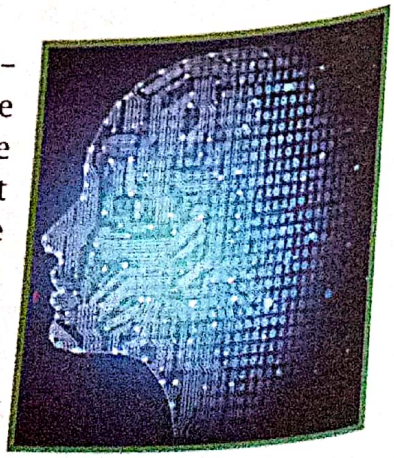
4. Mass destruction due to asteroid impact



Asteroids large enough to cause a total wipe-out hit the planet once every 120,000 years, with many other small ones in between. In 2011, NASA mapped out space objects that were bigger than a mile in radius that is likely to hit the planet. In the event that an asteroid of that size strikes the earth, it would displace enough dust into the atmosphere to block the sun and cause famine wiping out hundreds of millions.

5. Domination of AI

In recent years, the development of Artificial Intelligence has turned into a race. There are benefits of using AI, but experts have also warned of the dangers of granting too much power to technology. At the current pace of technological advancement, the world will be a different place a century



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from now, and the possibility of that future being run by artificially intelligent machines is not far-fetched.

6. Biological and chemical warfare

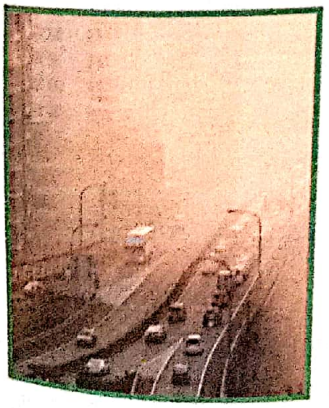
It is one thing to have diseases popping out from the natural world, but it is an entirely different situation when it becomes possible for these diseases to be engineered in the lab with the sole purpose of using them against fellow humans. The same goes for chemical warfare, where toxic chemicals are weaponized and used to end lives. Increased use of poisonous gases like Sarin and VX in conflicts is a potential future reality.

7. Overpopulation

It took over 200,000 years for human population to reach a billion for the first time. But it has taken only 200 years for that number to hit 7 billion people. If that rate of population growth is maintained, the world will be home to 8 billion people by 2025, and another 1 billion people will have been born by 2050. With resources diminishing, sustaining such a population will put a strain on nature and may lead to civil unrest, hunger and the spread of diseases.

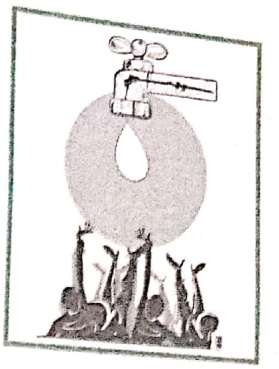
8. Increase in air pollution

The quality of the air is expected to worsen, even further increasing respiratory diseases. Massive industrialization, mining and deforestation that have been the hallmarks of the last century have led to an increase in toxic substances in the air. Vehicular emissions in urban centres only serve to make air conditions worse for living organisms. Scientists have predicted that air pollution will be the number one killer by the year 2050 with annual deaths caused by it jumping up to 6 million.



9. Food and water scarcity

With every decade that becomes warmer due to climate change, food production around the globe shrinks by 2%— 4 million metric tons of food. Africa and Asia will be the hardest hit as they are the food baskets of the world. Access to clean water is already a problem in the current world, with over 40% of people experiencing a shortage of it. According to MIT researchers, about 5 billion of the predicted 9.7 billion people in 2050 would be living in water-stressed areas with no means to irrigate their farms.



10. Increased use of cyber attacks

Cyber Warfare has become the centrepiece of all major global conflicts in the last decade, and signs show that this is just the beginning. With most of the daily-life routines and services like healthcare, banking, education, and security embracing technology, they have also opened themselves to interference from malicious forces. In the future, hackers could, for instance, disable a country's energy grid and bring everything to a halt, from hospitals to their defence leading to significant life losses and property damage.

Saving the future

Every single prediction presented in this article made by scientists has a human connection. They are consequences of irresponsible human activities that can only be solved by human actions. A nuclear war can be avoided by the complete destruction of all nuclear arms by all countries. Shutting down of all biological and chemical weaponization programs will put an end to the risk of future fallout. Saving forests and reducing pollution can help reduce the dangers that climate change poses for future generations. To deal with possible disease pandemics, better lifestyles have to be promoted, and the ban on the sale and trafficking of exotic animals has to be implemented to reduce the chances of contacts between humans and diseases-carrying animals. Many of the current living human beings will not be around when that future comes, but their actions today affect the people who will be present then, therefore, saving the future has to begin now rather than later.

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DEMOCRACY

Witnessing Tectonic Shifts

Zaid Bukhari

Democracy, which once was known as the best form of government, is facing a plethora of challenges today. Questions have been raised on multiple forums against those nations which are promoting and have adopted democracy as their form of government. The rise of populism, rebirth of fascism, resurgence of nationalism, revocation of special status of Jammu and Kashmir, current wave of technological change and the devastation created by Covid-19 have portrayed that democracy has lost its grip.

Discrimination on the basis of colour and religion is depicted clearly nowadays. Many countries, especially in Europe, are experiencing a wave of hatred against Muslims—Islamophobia. Moreover, the killing of Muslim worshippers in Christchurch, New Zealand, and India's revocation of J&K's special status given to it by the Indian constitution, and inhuman treatment of Muslims are some pieces of evidence. On the other hand, racial injustice in the United States is another sign of how "populist leaders" are thwarting the democracy from flourishing.

Rebirth of fascism as well as resurgence of nationalism has become an albatross around the neck of democratic norms and values. Modi's "Akhund Bharat Agenda" and genocide in Kashmir is an ample proof in this regard. Furthermore, leaders of Brazil, Israel and many other countries are using the Nazi ideology of racism to reap political benefits for themselves. On the other hand, the "America first" policy of Trump and his harsh attitude towards China do also expose his nationalist agenda.

New technologies are also battering democracy. The problems raised by the current wave of technological change—loss of authority on the part of traditional gatekeepers, sharing of data and the surveillance capacities—are hitting liberal democracy all at once. This is just the start, and repercussions can be more destructive if machine learning and other disruptive technologies make their way.

The recent outbreak of Covid-19 has played havoc with an already crumbling democratic framework. China's draconian measures to curb this pandemic were lauded by a bevy of countries. Additionally, Covid-19 is encouraging "Chinese World Order" to emerge globally. Following the outbreak of this pandemic, democracy seems fragile and in the post-Covid-19 world, many countries will be far less democratic than they were prior to its outbreak. Therefore, delay in elections, imposition of curfews and such other harsh measures adopted by countries to curb this pandemic are leading to a new wave of authoritarianism.

Democracy demands rule of law, separation of powers and liberty which are attainable through constitutional liberalism. Unfortunately, countries around the world are violating these objectives that are indispensable for a liberal democracy to prosper.

In a nutshell, democracy is on the back foot. In order to have a robust and functioning democracy, advocating the constitutional liberalism is the need of the hour. More than that, the above-mentioned hurdles like fascism and technological disruption must also be curtailed in an appropriate manner. Otherwise, democracy's survival will be in jeopardy.

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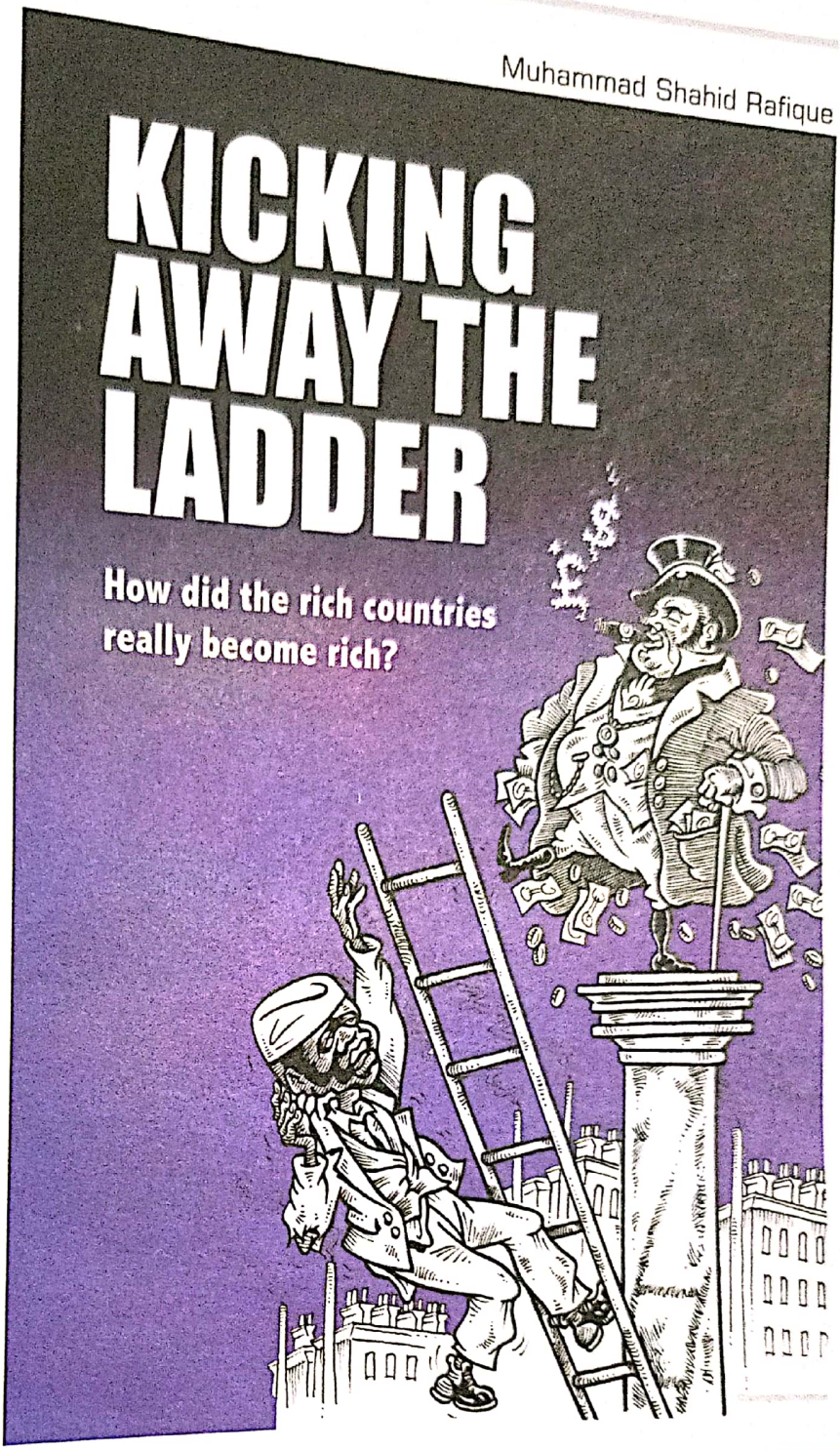
Muhammad Shahid Rafique

KICKING AWAY THE LADDER



This is how Ha-Joon Chang, a noted institutional economist specializing in development economics, and a Cambridge University Reader, starts his seminal book "Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy In Historical Perspective" in which he has discussed how the now-developed countries became wealthy and what lessons their development should provide for establishing a suitable framework for developing countries today. In this book, Chang takes stock of the factors responsible for the development of Britain and the United States of America. He analyses the history of capitalism in these two countries which he refers to as "unofficial" which is quite contrary to the commonly-held beliefs about capitalism. He mainly emphasizes that progress in the UK and the USA was heavily dependent on tariffs and protectionist policies, unlike the popular rhetoric of laissez faire. Now, they are dissuading the developing countries to do the same. Chang has examined the progress made by both these countries through the prism of tariffs and protectionism. This compels one to think whether it was tariff alone which triggered development in the countries or there were some other factors as well. The instant article intends to analyze the argument made by Chang in this book.

As noted earlier, Chang argues that the developed world now forces the developing world to do what they themselves had avoided when they were in this phase. Here comes the difference between the official and unofficial accounts of economic development under capitalism. Before proceeding to analyze the argument, we need to be sure-footed as to what is the difference, according to Chang, between official and unofficial accounts of capitalism. Official history of capitalism has it that economic development of USA and Britain is the

There is currently great pressure on developing countries to adopt a set of "good policies" and "good institutions" ... to foster their economic development. When some developing countries show reluctance in adopting them, the proponents of this recipe often find it difficult to understand these countries' stupidity in not accepting such a tried-and-tested recipe for development. After all, they argue, these are the policies and the institutions that the developed countries had used in the past in order to become rich. ... However, curiously, even many of those who are skeptical of the applicability of these policies and institutions to the developing countries take it for granted that these were the policies and the institutions that were used by the developed countries when they themselves were developing nations. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the historical fact is that the rich countries did not develop on the basis of the policies and the institutions that they now recommend to, and often force upon, the developing countries. Unfortunately, this fact is little known these days because the "official historians" of capitalism have been very successful in rewriting its history."

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outcome of laissez-faire trade policies. On the other hand, the developed countries aggressively used infant-industry protection policies when they were developing.

It is important to have import substitution defined at the outset. Import-substitution is a strategy by which infant-industry is protected by using locally manufactured goods. It is important to note that imports are banned and manufacturing is done for local consumption, not for export. The prime objective of import-substitution is to encourage and promote the growth of domestic industry. Export-promotion, on the other hand, is a policy to promote export by helping in export-related processes. Capital accumulation is defined as the process by which there is increase in the spread of capital through production. It is considered one of the components of economic growth.

There is no denying the fact that Britain is the country to have extracted maximum benefit out of free trade. Its vast political expansion gave her advantage over others to engage other countries and colonies in free trade. Threat of free trade or trade imposed upon a weaker state was what the Britain resorted to as a political tool for its expansion. It was in 1980s that the developing countries were compelled by the international financial institutions to draft their trade policies in consistence with Washington Consensus. Through international pressure, the developing countries adopted laissez-free trade policies. Such policy measures taken by the developing countries were not without any trouble. Their infant-industries were open to fierce competition and could not grow. This situation was prevalent in most developing countries. They were not in a position as per structural adjustment programmes by the international financial institutions to protect their infant-industries by imposing tariffs. This dilemma faced by the developing countries forced many economists to be sceptical about the effectiveness of laissez-faire trade policies. Chang argues that protectionist policies have been instrumental in the growth of both USA and UK. However it seems to be a highly debatable issue whether the imposition of tariffs was the sole factor responsible for the tremendous economic growth made

by the capitalistic regimes. In the coming paragraphs, it will be investigated whether the protectionist policies are responsible for the growth as Chang argues or are there other factors which Chang has been oblivious of.

In the late 19th century, it was witnessed that tariffs were positively correlated with growth in several countries including the UK. This is equally true in case of USA. During this period, USA also resorted to protectionist policies thereby resulting in enormous growth. Arguably, motivational force behind protectionist policies was to protect infant industry. Chang's main argument that protectionist policies worked for these countries is credible to the extent that strong growth was witnessed whenever tariff was imposed.

A positive relationship between tariff and growth, however, does not establish a causal relationship. Some countries like Argentina and Canada, made good progress in the late 19th century. Importantly, they were also high-tariff states. It is noteworthy that economic strides made by them were not the outcome of import-substitution. Rather, development was the outcome of export expansion with increasingly robust domestic market. Import substitution was not instrumental at all in case of Argentina and Canada.

It is interesting to note that there exists a strikingly positive relationship between growth and tariffs. The causes of this relationship need to be investigated minutely. When it comes to USA, it made tremendous progress in the late 19th century. It surpassed other countries in terms of economic growth during the period. A closer scrutiny will enable us to analyze the validity of Chang's argument further. The economic growth of USA during the late 19th century when the protectionist policies were in place was primarily because of increasing population and capital accumulation thereof, However, there has not been a strong relationship between tariff

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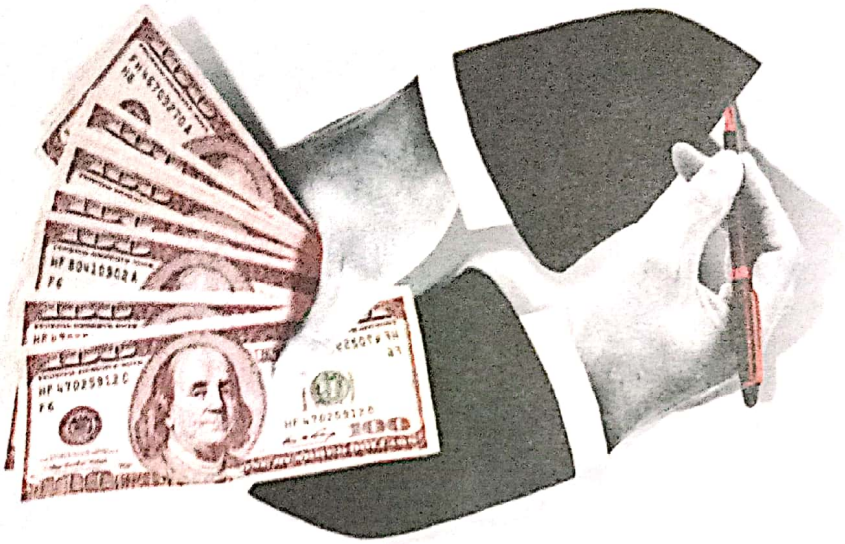
and capital accumulation. Seen from this perspective, tariff does not seem to have influenced American growth during the period.

Before Chang wrote 'Kicking Away the Ladder', a lot of research had been conducted exploring the relationship between tariff and growth. However, Chang does not make any mention of the research and completely sets aside other factors responsible for the growth. He has taken broader historical view into account and not used empirical data to support his argument. By doing this, Chang makes otherwise an interesting argument unconvincing. Had he stayed more focused on exploring as to what extent the tariffs had played their role in growth, he would have made a meaningful contribution.

Tariffs were supposed to be instrumental in ensuring infant-industry protection in the late 19th century in America. The example of tin-plate industry in America is perfect example of infant-industry protection. The industry did not make any progress until McKinley Tariff was imposed. After the imposition of tariff, it made remarkable progress. Before imposition of tariff, the industry failed to develop because the price of iron was too high which hampered the growth of the industry. Later on, the availability of iron at cheaper rates, coupled with production experience, turned around the industry. This would have happened even if there had been no tariff. From this example, it can be inferred that tariff had its role in spurring the growth in America. But there were other equally important factors responsible for the growth and they cannot be set aside.



England has been a high-tariff regime when it was developing. Indian textiles were banned because of superior quality and England resorted to import-substitution policy to protect its wool industry. Britain opened itself for free trade when it felt that it had got superiority over others. Chang's main argument is credible that UK was never open for free trade. It protected its industry before exposing it to fierce competition.

The developed countries adopted protectionist policies when they themselves were developing. However, no strong relationship has been found between protectionism and growth. Though growth was witnessed when tariffs were in place, yet there were other factors instrumental to tremendous growth. Laissez-faire, on the other hand, has also created enormous difficulties for the developing countries recently. Despite all its drawbacks, liberalization in the world trade since 1945 has been on the rise. Chang, however, cautions the developing countries suggesting them to look at the history.

Overall, Chang gives a debatable and interesting argument about the history of capitalism in UK and USA. Instead of getting involved in numerical data, he refers back to history to substantiate his argument. He forces us to look afresh at history and draw lessons from it so that a suitable course of action may be chalked out for the developing countries. He cautions the developing countries not to be carried away by the mantra of liberalization of trade. Though Chang makes a fascinating argument, yet he should have come up with a solution for the developing countries in a world which is much different from the late nineteenth century.

The writer is a Chevening Scholar and has studied International Development: Development Management at the University of Manchester

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WORLD IN FOCUS

NATIONAL

M. Usman Butt

Aug 17: Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa met the Saudi military chief of staff, General Fayyad bin Hamid Al-Ruwaili.

Aug 18: Pakistani Taliban announced that two of its splinter groups — Jammat-ul-Ahrar and Hezb-ul-Ahrar — had rejoined the mainstream Taliban.

Aug 18: Pakistan-born quantum astrophysicist Nergis Mavalvala was named the new dean of the MIT School of Science, one of the five schools of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Aug 18: Prime Minister Imran Khan (PMIK) categorically said that Pakistan could not recognise Israel as a state unless it gave freedom to Palestine.

Aug 18: Eminent painter and artist Shahid Jalal, a brother of Dr Ayesha Jalal, passed away.

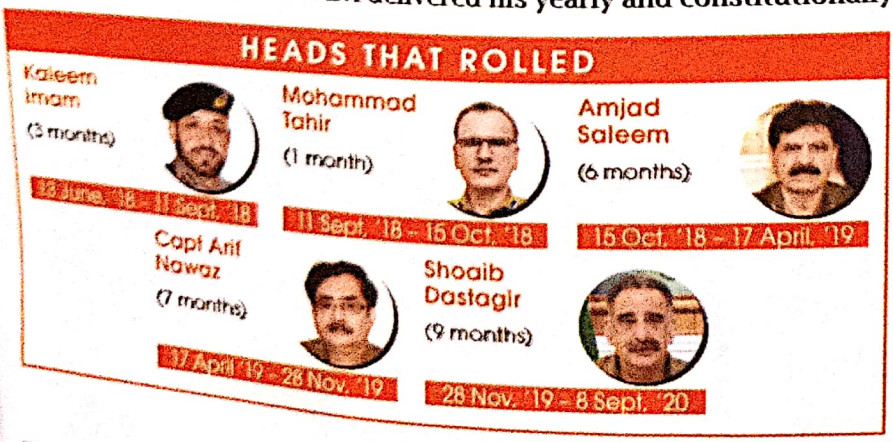
Aug 19: The Punjab government removed MD Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB) Rai Manzoor Nasir.

Aug 19: Ambassador Paul W. Jones, the US Charge d'Affairs to Pakistan, met COAS Gen Bajwa on his farewell visit.

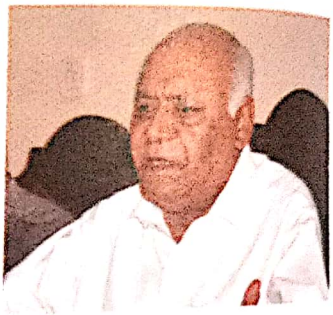
Aug 19: Pemra issued the first Teleport License of Pakistan to TeleNest (SMC) Pvt. Ltd.

Aug 20: The Sindh cabinet approved to establish the seventh district in Karachi after bifurcating the existing district West. Keamari district will comprise four sub-divisions of SITE, Baldia, Harbour and Maripur.

Aug 20: Beginning the third parliamentary year of the present National Assembly, President Dr Arif Alvi delivered his yearly and constitutionally



Senator Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo



On August 20, veteran politician and National Party president Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo passed away.

Born in 1958 into a family that played a crucial role in Balochistan's political landscape, Senator Bizenjo entered politics when he joined the Pakistan National Party (PNP). His father, Mir Ghous Baksh Bizenjo, was once the province's governor and struggled for the rights of the Baloch people.

The senator, throughout his political career, spoke up for the Baloch people's rights but categorically opposed armed resistance and militancy, choosing peaceful ways instead.

He also spoke in favour of a quick repatriation of the Afghan refugees, given that the situation in their home country has stabilised considerably. A respected figure in Pakistani politics, he was elected a Member of National Assembly (MNA) twice in the general elections of 1990 and 1997.

He founded the Balochistan National Democratic Party (BNDP), which eventually merged with the Balochistan National Movement (BNM) in 2003, becoming the National Party (NP). Interestingly, although his party boycotted the 2008 general elections in protest against the Balochistan situation, he was elected a senator in 2009.

The senator was again elected on the position in the 2013 general elections, with his party bagging 11 seats in the provincial assembly and one seat in the National Assembly. He took office as the federal minister for ports and shipping on May 20, 2016. Subsequently, during caretaker prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's tenure, he served as federal minister of maritime affairs, from August 2017 to May 2018. He did not contest the 2018 general elections.

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mandatory address to the joint sitting of parliament.

Aug 21: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi inaugurated the new state-of-the-art Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) in Karachi.

Aug 21: President Xi Jinping of China wrote a letter to President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi, saying his country is ready to work with Pakistan to deepen the building of 'China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future' and to jointly promote cooperation among the regional countries.

Aug 21: During the second round of China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue in Hainan province of China, Pakistan and China agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation to develop anti-Covid vaccine and called for global joint preventive and control measures.

Aug 22: The Muslim 500, a Jordan-based publication, declared PMIK 'Man of the Year', while US Congresswoman Rashida Tulaib was declared 'Woman of the Year'.

Aug 23: National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, achieved the prestigious Jean Monnet Chair of the European Union, first-ever in Pakistan.

Aug 23: The government banned another militant outfit Khatam-Ul-Ambia, which is said to be an offshoot of Ansarul Hussain that was banned in 2016, taking the number of outlawed organisations to 77.

Aug 23: Pakistan Navy inducted its first Type-054 Class Frigate into its fleet which was built in China.

Aug 23: A delegation from the Afghan Taliban arrived in Pakistan to discuss the ongoing peace process with the Pakistani leadership ahead of intra-Afghan dialogue

Aug 24: The National Assembly passed Anti-Money Laundering (second amendment) Bill, 2020 to meet the requirements of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Aug 25: The Senate rejected two FATF-related bills adopted by the National Assembly.

Aug 25: Unprecedented torrential rains wreaked havoc once again in Karachi. The Met Office confirmed that the 90-year record of monsoon downpour was broken.

Aug 25: With the third test ending in a draw, England won test series with Pakistan 1-0.

Aug 25: The federal government notified the appointment of Sima Kamil as deputy governor of the State Bank of Pakistan for a period of three years with immediate effect.

Aug 26: Syed Muzaffar Shah, the elder son of former chief minister Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah, passed away.

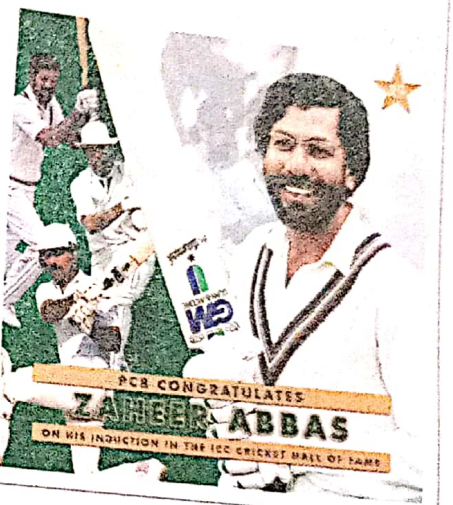
Aug 26: The Supreme Court held that permission from the first wife or arbitration council would be mandatory for husband in case of a second marriage.

Aug 26: During a phone call with Chairman of Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation Dr Abdullah Abdullah, PMIK urged Afghan leaders to seize the 'historic opportunity' for peace in Afghanistan and

The Asian Bradman

On Aug 23, Pakistan's batting great Zaheer Abbas, a fine batsman who represented the country in 78 Tests and 62 One-Day Internationals (ODIs), and earned the title "Asian Bradman," was inducted in ICC's Hall of Fame. Here are top 10 interesting facts about this batting giant:

1. Zaheer announced himself to international cricket with his magnum opus; an innings of 274 in 1971 against England at Birmingham, in what was only his second Test.
2. He is the only man from the subcontinent to amass over 100 centuries in First-Class cricket.
3. He was the second player to score his 100th first-class century in a Test Match.
4. On a record four occasions, he scored a double-century and a century in the same first-class match.
5. He scored two centuries in the same first-class match on a record eight occasions.
6. He was the first player to score three successive centuries in ODI cricket.
7. He spent 215 days as the No. 1 ODI batsman (1983-1984).
8. He captained Pakistan in 14 Tests and lost only one of them.
9. He later served as an ICC Match Referee and as ICC President.
10. He finished as one of Pakistan s greatest batsmen with 5062 runs and 12 Test hundreds.



What is Toshakhana?

Established in 1974, Toshakhana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division. It stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats and officials by heads of other governments, states and foreign dignitaries as a goodwill gesture.It has valuables ranging from bulletproof cars, gold-plated souvenirs, expensive paintings to watches, ornaments, rugs and swords.

Toshakhana (Maintenance and Administration) Rules, 1974, (revised up to 2012), are applied to the president, prime minister, Senate chairman and deputy chairman, National Assembly speaker and deputy speaker, federal ministers, ministers of state, members of parliament, government servants and also employees of autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies, whether on duty or leave, serving in any capacity in connection with the affairs of the government or while on deputation with any other body, agency, institution or authority.

Under the rules, it is mandatory that gifts of a certain value are deposited in Toshakhana. However, an official is also allowed to keep these gifts provided he pays a certain percentage of the price assessed by the Toshakhana evaluation committee.

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hoped for early commencement of Intra-Afghan talks.

Aug 26: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) declared that unelected advisers and special assistants to the prime minister cannot exercise executive or administrative powers in the functioning of the government and only elected representatives chosen by people have the privilege to run the affairs of ministries.

Aug 26: The federal government appointed Zahid Hussain Junejo as member of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) to represent Sindh.

Aug 26: PMIK constituted the National Coordination Committee on Tourism to implement the National Tourism Strategy, for boosting tourism and creating employment.

Aug 28: Pakistan Navy (PN) and Royal Navy (RN) UK, conducted bilateral Naval exercise White Star 2020 in North Arabian Sea and Passage Exercise in Gulf of Aden.

Aug 29: Popular Seraiki singer, Shafaullah Khan Rokhri passed away.

Aug 30: Pakistan's all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez became the first player to score 2000 runs and claim 50 wickets in men's T20Is.

Aug 31: The Punjab government created 15 full-fledged administrative departments in the newly-established south Punjab secretariat.

Aug 31: Pakistan finally accepted the latest structure headed by the ETK earlier extended by the Russian government paving way for starting work on construction of the much-touted North-South Gas Pipeline Project (NSGPP).

Sept. 01: The IHC ordered former prime minister and PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to return and surrender himself to it by Sept. 10.

FOUNDING LEADER OF PAKISTAN

MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH

1876-1948

Pakistan's founding leader and Quaid-i-Azam (great leader) Jinnah commemorated in 72nd anniversary of his passing

1876
He was born in Karachi on Dec. 25.

1893
He goes to London and embarks on his law study at the Lincoln's Inn.

1896
Jinnah leaves London for his country as a barrister and starts practicing his profession in Mumbai.

1906
He joins the political party Indian National Congress (INC)

Advocating for the idea of an independent India bringing Hindus and Muslims together, Jinnah refuses to join another political party, All-India Muslim League (AIML), established in 1906.

1913
He joins AIML with the pressure of Muslim politicians.

1916
Jinnah becomes the leader of AIML.

1920
Jinnah remains a member of INC until 1920, hoping to unite Muslims and Hindus under a single political organization, but his efforts did not bring lasting returns.

He completely parts ways with the INC due to the rising number of Hindu nationalists in the party and his disagreements with Mahatma Gandhi.

1930-1934
He lives in London practices as a barrister.

1934
He returns to India and becomes the head of AIML again.

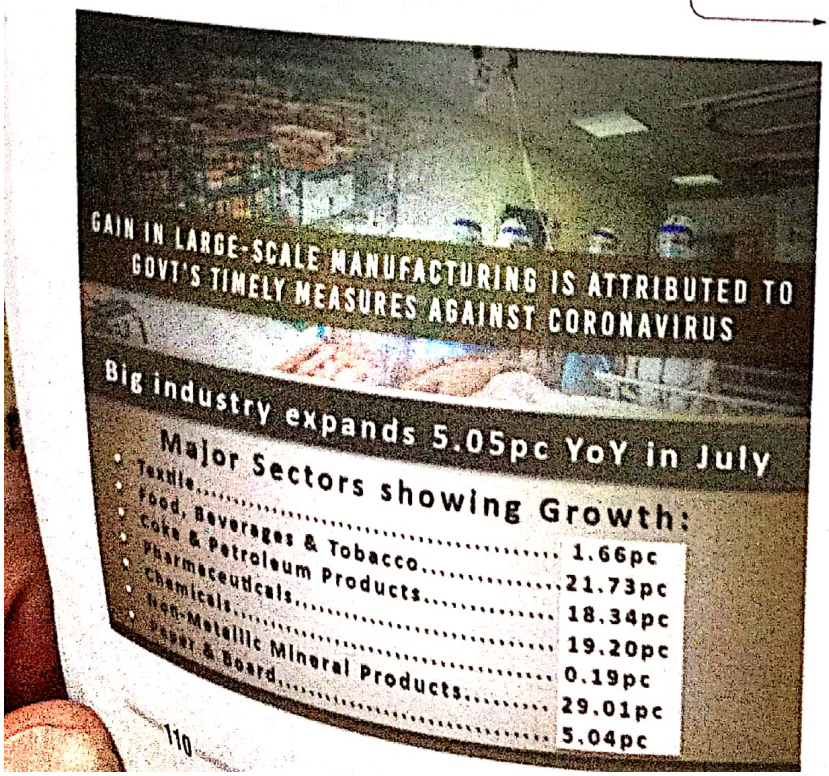
1940
Meeting in Lahore on March 22-23, AIML adopts the "Lahore Resolution" with the idea of a separate state for Muslims adopted as a policy for the first time.

1947
Lord Mountbatten, Britain's last viceroy of India, announces the partition of the country on June 3.

AIML elects Jinnah as Pakistan's first governor-general, and Jinnah arrives in Karachi from New Delhi on Aug. 7 as the first governor-general of Pakistan.

Pakistan officially gains its independence on Aug 14.

1948
Jinnah died in Karachi on Sept. 11.


GAIN IN LARGE-SCALE MANUFACTURING IS ATTRIBUTED TO GOVT'S TIMELY MEASURES AGAINST CORONAVIRUS
Big industry expands 5.05pc YoY in July
Major Sectors showing Growth:
Textile 1.66pc
Food, Beverages & Tobacco 21.73pc
Coke & Petroleum Products 18.34pc
Pharmaceuticals 19.20pc
Chemicals 0.19pc
Non-Metallic Mineral Products 29.01pc
Paper & Board 5.04pc

Sept. 01: Pakistan ended their tour of England with a five-run win in the third Twenty20 international at Old Trafford.

Sept. 02: The Supreme Court (SC) suspended the operation of the judgment delivered by the Sindh High Court (SHC) quashing the Fact Finding Report of the Sugar Commission as well the notification for its constitution.

Sept. 02: Ex-British High Commissioner (HC) to Pakistan Thomas Drew was appointed the Director General (DG) Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan and Afghanistan at the newly-merged Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Sept. 02: Haider Ali became the first cricketer for Pakistan to score a fifty on T20I debut.

Sept. 03: Pakistan became Asia's best-performing stock market and the fourth-best performer in the world, defying the odds amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Sept. 03: Shahram Tarakai and Anwar Zaib Khan took oath as provincial ministers in the KP cabinet.

Sept. 04: Head of the PCB's Cricket Committee Iqbal Qasim

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Russia's Scientific Troops

the army – who apart from learning military art are usually engaged in performing tasks not demanding much qualification. Many people considered military service a waste of time where you learn nothing and lose knowledge and competence obtained during higher education. To avoid conscription, some students tried to prolong their studies until they turned 27 years, the conscription age limit in Russia. Others left the country to continue their studies or start working abroad, creating an additional problem of brain drain. To deal with the problem, the Defence Ministry in 2013 established scientific troops, where former students apply their qualifications in practice, working for the development of the defence industry. Scientific troops are a powerful and very effective talent foundry where servicemen called operators, not privates, are performing scientific research in the interests of the Russian defence industry. Service in the scientific troops is built so that operators capture the full benefits of their year of service—practicing, improving, and upgrading their skills and topping up qualifications while having the opportunity to feel out carrier possibilities. Operators have an opportunity to observe the complete process of creating weapons and military equipment from a draft to the end product and present the results to the representatives of the defence and other industries.

tendered his resignation.

Sept. 04: A local court acquitted former Balochistan MPA Majeed Khan Achakzai in a case regarding the death of a traffic warden over three years ago.

Sept. 04: PMIK refused to accept the resignation of Special Assistant on Information Lt Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa.

Sept. 05: PMIK unveiled Rs1,100 billion development package for Karachi to resolve its immediate problems.

Sept. 06: On the eve of Defence Day, COAS General Qamar Ajved Bajwa conferred military awards on army personnel for acts of gallantry during various operations.

Sept. 06: Noted research scholar and an authority on Sufism Prof Pervez Khan Mahjoor Kheshgi died. He was 68.

Sept. 07: President Arif Alvi awarded 'Tamgha-e-Imtiaz' to renowned journalist and politician late Fareeha Razzaq Awan on her work on human rights.

Sept. 07: Pakistan nominated Mansoor Ahmad Khan, a veteran diplomat, as its new ambassador to Afghanistan.

Sept. 08: Punjab IGP Shoaib Dastageer was removed and replaced with Inam Ghani.

Sept. 08: The federal cabinet gave approval to the launching of a ferry service for pilgrims (Zaireen and Hujjaj) to provide them an affordable travel facility.

Sept. 08: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar approved launching of Punjab Employment Scheme worth more than Rs 30 billion to provide soft loans on easy terms in the province.

Sept. 09: Chinese Ambassador for Pakistan Yao Jing was transferred back to headquarters in Beijing for next posting.

Ambassador Yao Jing served in Pakistan thrice in various capacities and in aggregate stayed in Islamabad for eleven years.

Sept. 09: China designated Nong Rong, who is currently a minister in a provincial government, as its new ambassador to Pakistan.

Sept. 09: The 235th Corps Commanders Conference was held at the General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

Sept. 09: An accountability court indicted former president Asif Ali Zardari and ex-prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani in the Toshakhana reference, while declaring former premier Nawaz Sharif a proclaimed offender over his continued absence from the proceedings.

Sept. 09: A Pakistani-American, Shahid Khan, emerged as the 66th richest man in the United States in 2020, with a total worth of $7.8 billion.

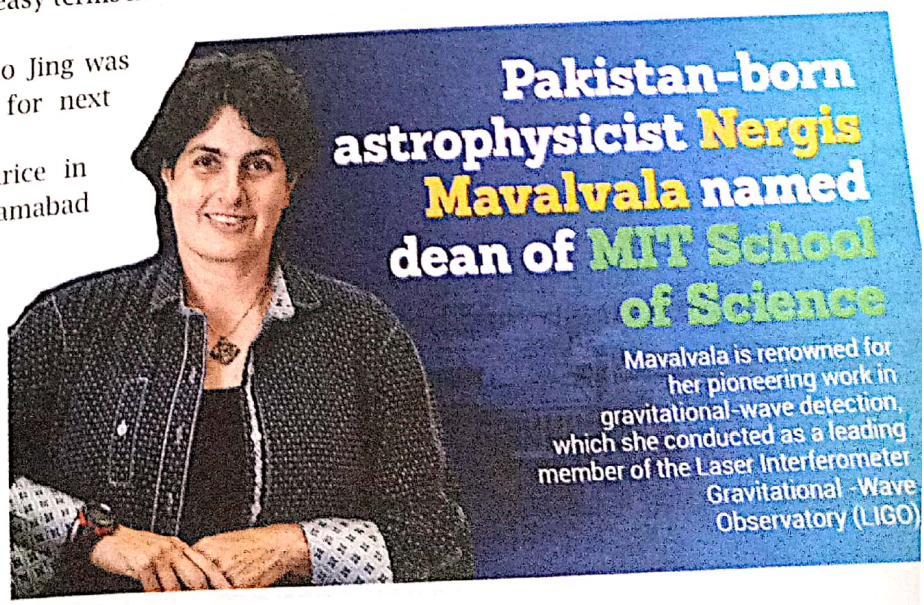
Sept. 10: The Asian World News selected 10 world politicians for working hard to overcome the effects of Covid-19 on their compatriots and placed PMIK at the top of the list.

Sept. 10: Pakistan and Uzbekistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishment of Joint Working Group on Trade and and Economic Affairs.

Sept. 10: While addressing the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers moot in Moscow, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the CPEC, the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), supplements the SCO's vision of regional connectivity and economic integration.

Sept. 10: The World Health Organisation (WHO) said Pakistan was among countries from whom the international community should learn how to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sept. 11: United States Central Command (US CENTCOM) commander General Kenneth McKenzie Jr called on COAS Gen Bajwa and the two discussed the Afghan peace process as


Pakistan-born astrophysicist Nergis Mavalvala named dean of MIT School of Science
Mavalvala is renowned for her pioneering work in gravitational-wave detection, which she conducted as a leading member of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational -Wave Observatory (LIGO)

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well as military cooperation between the two countries.

Sept. 11: Prof Dr Asghar Zaidi, the Vice Chancellor of Government College University Lahore, was given additional charge of the post of Vice Chancellor, Baba Guru Nanak University, Nankana Sahab.

Sept. 11: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Moscow.

Sept. 12: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police formally delegated the powers of drawing and disbursing officers (DDOs) to the station house officers (SHOs).

Sept. 13: The army killed four terrorists, including terrorist commander Ihsan Ullah alias Ihsan Sanray, near the inter-district boundary of North and South Waziristan

Sept. 13: Prominent religious scholar Allama Zamir Akhtar Naqvi passed away. He was 76.

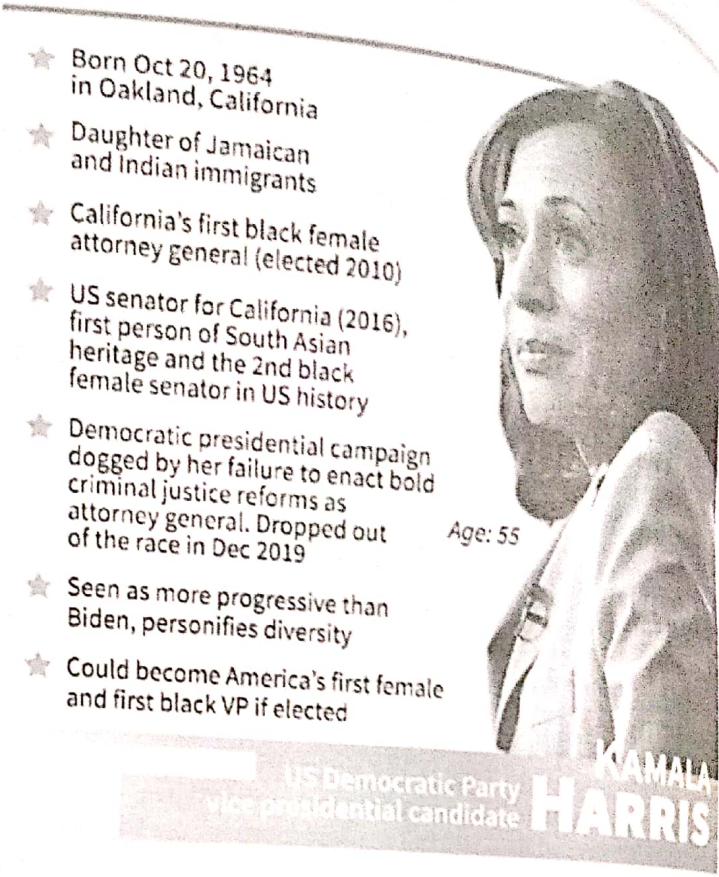
About Zamir Akhtar Naqvi

Allama Naqvi was born in 1944 in the Indian city of Lucknow where he did his graduation before migrating to Karachi in 1967. He had a PhD degree from University of Karachi and was known to have knowledge of science, philosophy, literature, culture, journalism and Islamic history. He also remained editor of Al-Kalam magazine and headed Anees Academy. He had written 28 books on different subjects, including Urdu literature and the events of Karbala.

Sept. 13: The great grandson of Awadh's last king Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and grandson of Nawab Birjis Qadr, Prince Kaukab Qadr Sajjad Ali Meerza, died in Kolkata. He was 87.

Sept. 14: Pakistan and China signed an agreement on Rashakai Special Economic Zone (RSEZ).

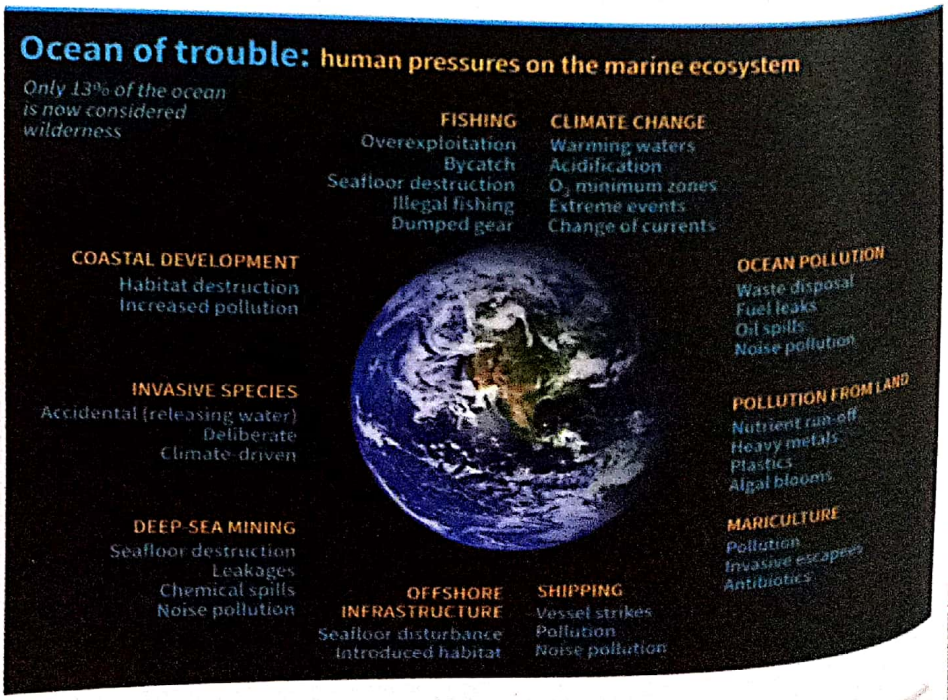
Rashakai Special Economic Zone (REZ) will be established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The 1000 acres land of REZ will be developed in three phases. The total area designated for Industrial use is 702 acres and as per Federal SEZA Regulations, 159 acres will be developed in Phase I, 279 acres in phase II and subsequently 264 acres in Phase III. For commercial use, an area of 76 acres was allocated. An access road (3.2 km) from Wali Interchange to SEZ zero point is under construction (Phase-I). Moreover, REZ is connected to all provinces of Pakistan through Airport (at a distance of 65 KM from REZ), Dry Port (65 KM), Railway station (25 KM), Motorway, highway (5 KM) and city center (15 KM). Based on the strengths of the connected districts and resource pool, the economic zone has predominant investment feasibility for industries in fruit & food processing/packaging and textile.


Born Oct 20, 1964 in Oakland, California
Daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants
California's first black female attorney general (elected 2010)
US senator for California (2016), first person of South Asian heritage and the 2nd black female senator in US history
Democratic presidential campaign dogged by her failure to enact bold criminal justice reforms as attorney general. Dropped out of the race in Dec 2019
Seen as more progressive than Biden, personifies diversity
Could become America's first female and first black VP if elected
Age: 55
US Democratic Party vice presidential candidate
KAMALA HARRIS

Sept. 14: A delegation headed by US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad called on COAS Gen Bajwa at the GHQ.

Sept. 14: The National Assembly extended the International Court of Justice (Review and Re-consideration) Ordinance meant to facilitate convicted Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav through a voice vote for four months.

Sept. 15: Thousands of schools and colleges across Pakistan reopened after remaining closed for more than six months due to the coronavirus pandemic.



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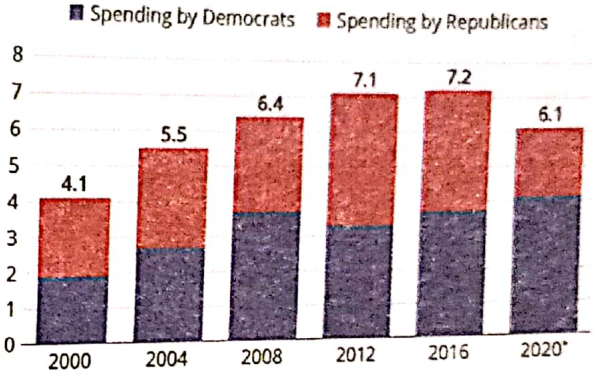
INTERNATIONAL

Aug 16: The Israeli and UAE foreign ministers inaugurated direct phone services between their two countries.
Aug 16: Former India Test opener Chetan Chauhan died aged 73 of coronavirus.
Aug 16: Donald Trump's younger brother Robert Trump died.
Aug 16: A special session of the D-8 Commission co-chaired by Turkey (as current head) and Bangladesh (as incoming head) was held virtually.
Aug 16: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Baszczak signed an Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement that sets out the legal framework for the additional troop presence.
Aug 16: Top seed Simona Halep won the Prague Open, the second post-lockdown WTA event.
Aug 16: A temperature of 130 degrees Fahrenheit (54.4 degrees Celsius) was recorded in California's Death Valley. It could be the hottest global temperature ever measured with modern instruments.
Aug 16: An asteroid - named 2020 QG - passed 1,830 miles (2,950 kilometres) above Earth, the closest asteroid ever observed passing by our planet.
Aug 17: The General Presidency for the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques appointed 10 women to senior leadership positions in the authority.
Aug 17: Pandit Jasraj, one of India's most celebrated classical singers, died. He was 90.
Aug 18: The Chinese government granted China's first Covid-19 vaccine patent. The vaccine candidate, referred to as Ad5-nCoV, is co-developed by a research team led by Chen Wei, an academician with the Chinese Academy of Engineering and researcher at the Academy of Military Sciences, as well as Chinese biopharmaceutical company CanSino Biologics.
Aug 18: The UN-backed Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) found Salim Ayyash, a member of the Hezbollah, guilty over the 2005 murder of former Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri.
Aug 18: Oman's Sultan Haitham appointed Badr Albusaidi as his country's new foreign minister, replacing the long-serving Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah.
Aug 18: The UN designated 2024 as International Year of Camelids to highlight their important role in communities.
Aug 18: Mali President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was detained by mutinying soldiers in the capital Bamako.
Aug 20: Iran unveiled two missiles that have a bigger range than before.
One of the new missiles, the "Haj Qassem," a ballistic missile, was named in honour of top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani, killed in January in an American strike in Baghdad. The other, a cruise missile, was named in honour of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the Iraqi lieutenant of Soleimani, who was killed in the same Baghdad strike.
Aug 20: The UAE connected the Arab world's first nuclear power plant to country's grid and began providing electricity.
Aug 20: A US federal court judge ruled that President Donald Trump cannot block a prosecutor's subpoena for eight years of his tax returns.
Aug 21: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ordered to transform the Kariye Museum into a mosque. It was an ancient Orthodox church that became a mosque and then a popular Istanbul museum.
Aug 21: Libya's warring and rival administrations announced in separate statements they would cease all hostilities and organise nationwide elections. The statements were signed by Fayez al-Sarraj, head of the UN-recognised unity Government of National Accord (GNA), based in the capital Tripoli, and Aguila Saleh, speaker of the eastern-based parliament, backed by military strongman Khalif Haftar.

The Cost of the Election

Total spending on the U.S. congressional and presidential elections (in billion U.S. dollars)



* All filings available as of Sept 17, 2020
Includes spending by presidential candidates, congressional candidates, parties and outside spending. Adjusted for inflation
Source: Opensecrets.org

Aug 21: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced Turkey has made a historic discovery of gas in the Black Sea.
Aug 22: A US bid to re-impose international sanctions on Iran failed as 13 countries on the 15-member UN Security Council opposed it.
Aug 22: Sevilla beat Inter in final to win sixth Europa title.
Aug 22: Former US Open champion Stan Wawrinka won the second-tier Challenger tournament in Prague.
Aug 23: Miguel Oliveira claimed a first MotoGP for Portugal and the Tech-3 team.
Aug 24: Dustin Johnson seized the world number one ranking after winning the US PGA Northern Trust.
Aug 24: Bayern Munich became kings of Europe for the sixth time with a victory over Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League final in Lisbon.
Aug 24: The US authorized to use blood plasma from recovered coronavirus patients as a treatment for Covid-19.
Aug 25: Seasoned England pacer James Anderson became the first fast bowler to take 600 Test wickets.
Aug 25: India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) charged 19 people, including seven Pakistani nationals, over a deadly bomb attack on a security convoy in Pulwama area of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir last year.
Aug 25: The WHO declared that Africa was now free of the virus that causes polio, a landmark in a decades-long campaign to eradicate the disease around the world.
Aug 25: Arnold Spielberg, father of filmmaker Steven

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Spielberg and an innovating engineer whose work helped make the personal computer possible, died at 103.

Aug 27: TikTok CEO Kevin Mayer quit the company as tensions soar between Washington and Beijing over the Chinese-owned video platform.

Aug 27: Global temperatures boosted by climate change will still be higher than usual despite the cooling effect of a La Nina weather phenomenon expected to develop in the coming months, the UN said. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said there was a 60 percent chance of a La Nina event between September and November.

Aug 27: Barcelona's city council voted to strip former Spanish King Juan Carlos of all awards he received from the city.

Aug 27: The world's richest person and the Amazon founder and CEO, Jeff Bezos, became the world's first-ever person to amass a $200 billion fortune.

Aug 27: Christchurch mosque shooter Brenton Tarrant was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole—the first time such a sentence was handed down in New Zealand.

Aug 27: Coup leaders in Mali released ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita from detention.

Aug 27: Naomi Osaka of Japan withdrew from the Western & Southern Open in protest against racial injustice.

Aug 28: Japan's longest-serving prime minister, Shinzo Abe, announced to step down because a chronic health problem has resurfaced.

Aug 28: Amnesty International blamed Delhi police for "grave human rights violations" during communal riots in the Indian capital earlier this year, and said the police were even "active participants" in the violence.

Aug 28: Russia released classified footage of the world's largest nuclear explosion, caused when the Soviet Union detonated the so-called Tsar Bomba almost 60 years ago. The hydrogen bomb, which carried the force of 50 million tons of conventional explosives, was detonated in a test in October 1961, 4,000 metres over the remote Novaya Zemlya archipelago above the Arctic Circle.

The footage shows an immense fireball and a 60-km high mushroom cloud rising after the explosion lit up the sky.

Aug 29: India withdrew from a multilateral military exercise — Kavkaz-2020 — that was scheduled to be held in southern Russia from Sep 21 as it did not want to perform drills with Pakistani and Chinese soldiers.

Aug 29: The UAE formally announced ending the boycott of Israel by repealing legislation imposing a boycott of Israel after the two countries struck a US-brokered deal to normalise relations.

Aug 29: Chadwick Boseman, star of the ground-breaking superhero movie `Black Panther,` has died at the age of 43.

Aug 29: Novak Djokovic kept his unbeaten streak in 2020 alive as he defeated Milos Raonic 1-6 6-3 6-4 in the final of the Western & Southern Open.

Aug 30: The Chinese PLA has repulsed the Indian army attack in Eastern Ladakh which was termed by the Indians as "pre-emptive action".

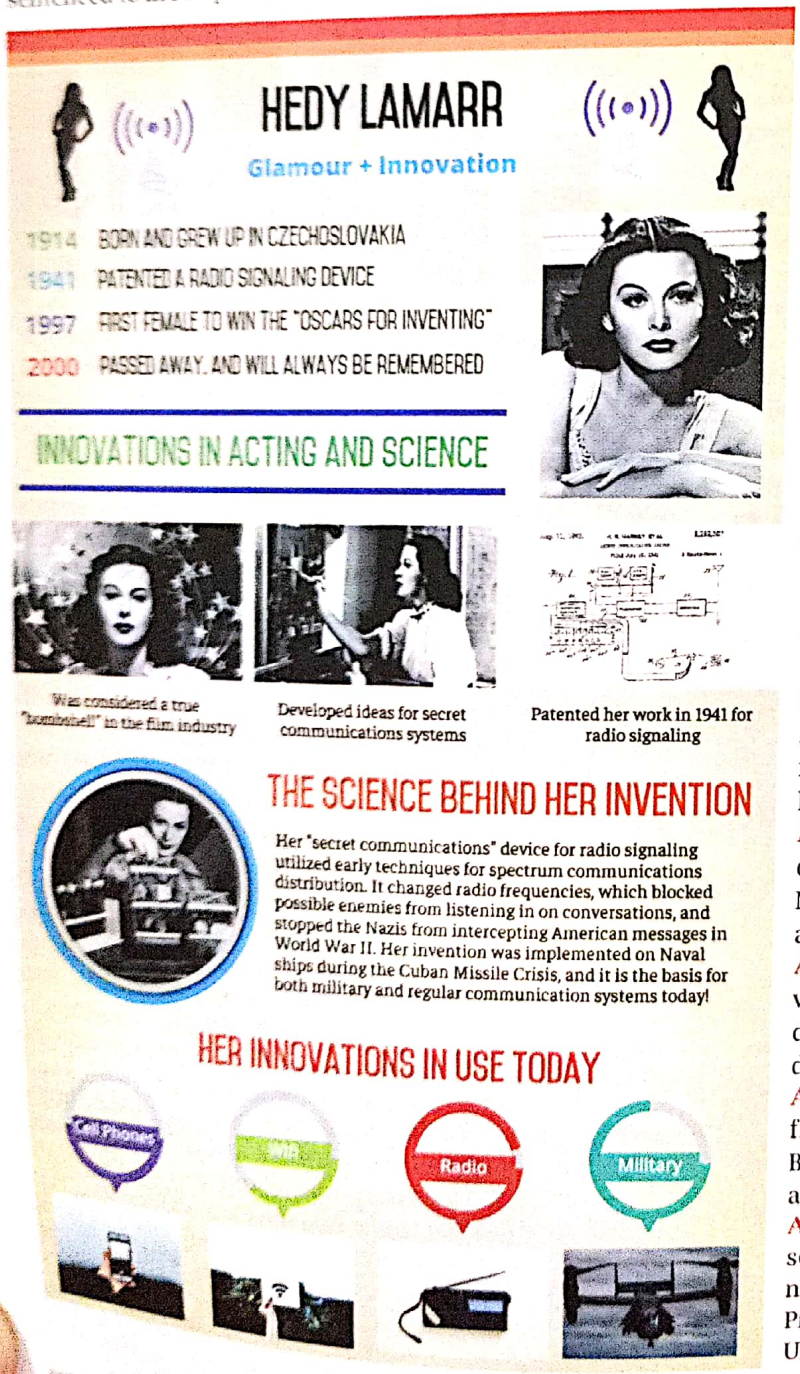
Aug 30: Lewis Hamilton took another step towards a record-equalling 7th Formula One title with a dominant lights-to-flag victory in the Belgian Grand Prix.

Aug 31: Lebanon's under-fire political leaders designated a new prime minister, the diplomat Mustapha Adib, to tackle the country's deep political and economic crisis.

Aug 31: Former India president Pranab Mukherjee, a veteran powerbroker once described in leaked US diplomatic cables as "the ultimate Congress Party fixer", died at the age of 84.

Aug 31: India top court imposed a symbolic one rupee fine on a celebrated public service lawyer Prashant Bhushan for contempt in a case that raised concern about free speech in the world's largest democracy.

Aug 31: Top aides to US President Donald Trump—his senior adviser and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and national security adviser Robert O'Brien—and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in the United Arab Emirates on a historic flight from Tel Aviv to


HEDY LAMARR
Glamour + Innovation
1914 BORN AND GREW UP IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA
1941 PATENTED A RADIO SIGNALING DEVICE
1997 FIRST FEMALE TO WIN THE "OSCARS FOR INVENTING"
2000 PASSED AWAY, AND WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED
INNOVATIONS IN ACTING AND SCIENCE
Was considered a true "bombshell" in the film industry
Developed ideas for secret communications systems
Patented her work in 1941 for radio signaling
THE SCIENCE BEHIND HER INVENTION
Her "secret communications" device for radio signalling utilized early techniques for spectrum communications distribution. It changed radio frequencies, which blocked possible enemies from listening in on conversations, and stopped the Nazis from intercepting American messages in World War II. Her invention was implemented on Naval ships during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and it is the basis for both military and regular communication systems today!
HER INNOVATIONS IN USE TODAY
Cell Phones
Wi-Fi
Radio
Military

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finalize a pact marking open relations between the Gulf power and Israel.

Aug 31: Sudanese leaders and rebel commanders agreed on a "historic" peace deal.

Sept. 01: Saudi King Salman sacked Prince Fahd bin Turki bin Abdulaziz as commander of joint forces in the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen, and relieved his son Prince Abdulaziz of his post as deputy governor of al-Jouf region.

Sept. 01: The Maldives Commonwealth Games Association was reinstated as a member of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF).

Sept. 02: The Afghan government released nearly 200 Taliban prisoners from the group of 400 "hardcore" prisoners in a bid to push for peace talks.

Sept. 02: The grandnephew of assassinated president John F. Kennedy, Joseph Kennedy III, long seen as a rising star, crashed to defeat in his bid for a US Senate seat, the first time the storied American political dynasty lost a state election in Massachusetts.

Sept. 02: Tunisia's parliament approved the country's third government in less than a year. Former interior minister Hichem Mechichi was confirmed as premier.

Sept. 02: Saudi Arabia announced that it will henceforth allow flights from "all countries" to cross over its airspace on flights to or from the United Arab Emirates. Israeli flights can head to and from the Far East via Saudi Arabia and UAE.

Sept. 02: The US imposed sanctions on ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda over her investigation into whether American forces committed war crimes in Afghanistan.

Sept. 03: Scientists announced the discovery of a black hole — the oldest ever detected — that shouldn't even exist according to the current understanding of cosmic monsters so dense not even light can escape their gravitational pull.

Born of a merger between two other black holes, GW190521 weighs in at 142 times the mass of our Sun and is the first "intermediate mass" black hole ever observed.

> For over **72 years**, India has **illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir** against the wishes of the Kashmiri people, and in **blatant violation** of the **resolutions of the Security Council** and indeed its own commitments.
>
> **PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN**
> ADDRESS TO THE 75TH UNGA SESSION

Sept. 03: Afghanistan named a career diplomat Najibullah Alikhil as ambassador to Pakistan.

Sept. 03: Seven years after former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden blew the whistle on the mass surveillance of Americans' telephone records, an appeals court found the programme was unlawful and that the US intelligence leaders who publicly defended it were not telling the truth.

Sept. 03: Former England all-rounder David Capel died at the age of 57.

Sept. 04: Sri Lankan cabinet of ministers approved the 20th Constitutional Amendment bill, which seeks to revert back to the all powerful executive presidency which existed between 1978 and 2015.

Sept. 04: In a historic move, eight Kuwaiti women were approved to become judges.

Sept. 04: Former foes Kosovo and Serbia agreed on a historic pact to normalise economic relations, in presence of President Donald Trump at the Oval office.

Sept. 05: The US election officially opened when North Carolina launched vote-by-mail operations for the Nov. 3

GK Tidbits

1. 'The Smile Snatchers' is a novella written by: Mian Raza Rabbani
2. Pakistan's current Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) is: Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhera
3. Begum Hazrat Mahal was the second wife of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, the last king of: Awadh
4. The first female ever to participate in India's National Snooker Championship was: Manzilat Fatima
5. Pakistan's largest freshwater lake is: Manchar Lake
6. Spreading over 250 square kilometres, Manchar Lake is located west of the mighty Indus River in the districts of: Dadu and Jamshoro
7. Manama is the capital of: Bahrain
8. Pakistan's first female match referee is: Saman Zulfiqar
9. G20 chair for the year 2020 is: Saudi Arabia
10. Pakistan Navy Day is celebrated on: Sep 08
11. The first male player to score 100 goals in international matches was: Ali Daei of Iran
12. Virgin Atlantic is a British airline with its head office in: Crawley, England
13. El Niño, which means The Little Boy or Christ Child, is a word from: Spanish
14. Broghil Festival is celebrated in: Chitral
15. An ancient Asian game in which a dead goat is pulled by the player while riding on a horse is called: Buzkashi
16. The valley in which Chiantar glacier is located is: The Broghil Valley
17. The Broghil National Park was established in: 2010
18. The current Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is: Rafael Grossi
19. The IAEA chief Rafael Grossi belongs to: Argentina
20. The founder of Khan Academy, a free online education platform and an organization, is: Salman Khan
21. A son of a Bengali father and an Indian mother, Salman Khan founded the Khan Academy in: 2008
22. Leon Trotsky was a revolutionary and Communist theorist from: Russia
23. Leon Trotsky was assassinated on August 20, 1940, by Ramón Mercader in: Mexico
24. Lev Davidovich Bronstein Trotsky was the founder of: The Red Army
25. The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, or NKVD, was the interior ministry of: Soviet Union
26. Politiets sikkerhetstjeneste (PST) is the intelligence agency of: Norway
27. The current chief of Mossad, Israeli spy agency, is: Yossi Cohen
28. The current President of Israel is: Reuven Rivlin
29. Women in the United States were granted right to vote in: 1920
30. The amendment to the US constitution that granted women the right to vote was: 19th Amendment
31. The 19th Amendment to the US Constitution was formally certified on: Aug. 26, 1920
32. The first woman elected as a US state governor in her own right was: Ella Grasso in Connecticut (1975)
33. Dillu Roy Ruins, dating back to the Buddhist era, was declared a protected site in: 1962
34. Dillu Roy Ruins is located at the border line of

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contest between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden.

Sept. 06: Afghan Taliban replaced Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanakzai as head of their negotiation team and appointed Sheikh Abdul Hakeem for the peace negotiations with the Afghan government.

The Taliban leader also replaced Suhail Shaheen, spokesman of Taliban Qatar-based political council, with Dr Naeem Wardag.

Sept. 07: Oscar-winning Czech film director Jiri Menzel died aged 82.

Sept. 07: China said that it had never recognized the so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally established by India on the Chinese territory.

Sept. 08: Two Myanmar soldiers were taken to The Hague after confessing to murdering minority Rohingya Muslims during a 2017 crackdown.

Sept. 08: Agence France-Presse (AFP) lodged a complaint with French regulators over a standoff with Google.

Sept. 08: China named an asteroid Wuweiren, after renowned scientist Wu Weiren, chief designer of China's lunar exploration programme. The asteroid, coded 281880, was discovered by the Near-Earth Object Telescope at the Purple Mountain Observatory in East China.

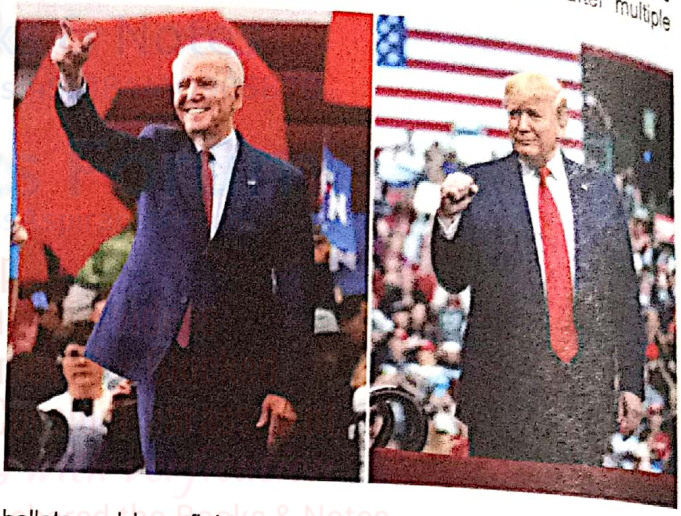
Sept. 08: Jonathan Jones, the head of British government's legal department, resigned, as the government admitted that it may break international law by not applying parts of its Brexit divorce deal relating to Northern Ireland.

Sept. 09: Portuguese football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo became the second male player to reach a century of goals for a national team.

The record for most international goals belongs to Ali Daei, who hit 109 goals for Iran in 149 appearances between 1993 and 2006. The striker's career saw him line out for the likes of Bayern Munich, but he enjoyed much of his success on the international stage.

US Presidential Nominating Conventions

The United States has held presidential nominating conventions for almost 200 years, and they have served in recent decades as an important televised introduction to each party's candidate in the final months before the election. These conventions were once a place where presidential nominees were decided, often after multiple



ballots and long fights, often among party elders in "smoke-filled rooms." But that has not happened in decades. The last time a nomination was in much doubt as a convention opened was 1976, when Republican President Gerald Ford held off Ronald Reagan in Kansas City, Missouri. The last convention to go beyond a first ballot was in 1952 in Chicago, when Democrats chose Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson.

Now, the nominees are chosen by voters in a state-by-state series of primary elections, with delegates from each state ratifying the choice at conventions that are designed to showcase the party's candidate and message.

GK Tidbits

districts DG Khan and: **Rajanpur**

35. World Humanitarian Day (WHD) is observed every year on: **19 August**

36. Shah Allah Ditta caves are located in: **Margalla Hills**

37. The president of the UN Security Council for the month of October 2020 is: **Russian Federation**

38. Pilu, the writer of famous folktale Qissa Sahibaan and Mirza, belonged to: **Dhun, Chakwal**

39. After Pilu, the person who immortalised Mirza Sahibaan with his highly imaginative reconstruction and unique characterisation was: **Hafiz Barkhurdar**

40. Gregorian calendar is named after: **Pope Gregory XIII**

41. September 14 is commemorated as the day of promulgation of: **Gregorian Calendar**

42. India's current president is: **Ram Nath Kovind**

43. The smallest district, by area, in Punjab province is: **Lahore**

44. "Canis Lupus familiaris" is the scientific name for: **Dog**

45. "Struthio camelus" is the name of a big bird, in fact the largest living bird, commonly called: **Ostrich**

46. The flightless bird also known as a "Spheniscidae" is: **Penguin**

47. The animal whose scientific name is "Balaenoptera musculus" is: **Blue Whale**

48. The number of eyelids cats have on each eye is: **Three**

49. The scientific name for cats is: **Felis catus**

50. Metals are good conductors of heat than insulator because they contain free: **Electrons**

51. The vitamin that is generally excreted by humans in urine is: **Vitamin C**

52. The largest amount in terms of percent by mass in the earth's crust is of: **Oxygen**

53. The Mansabdari system introduced in India by Akbar was borrowed from: **Mongolia**

54. Henry Dunant shared the first Nobel Peace Prize, in 1901, for founding: **The International Committee of the Red Cross**

55. The longest and thickest bone in human body is: **Femur**

56. The highest lake above the sea level in the world is: **Lake Titicaca**

57. The 'Misl' of which Ranjit Singh was the leader was: **Sukerchakia**

58. The headquarters of International Olympic Committee is in: **Lausanne (Switzerland)**

59. The organ known as 'graveyard of RBCs' is: **Spleen**

60. The land tenure systems introduced by Lord Cornwallis was: **Zamindari**

61. If the temperature of a semiconductor rises, its resistivity will: **Decrease**

62. The number of sides in an icosagon is: **20**

63. The person who invented the World Wide Web in 1990 was: **Tim Berners-Lee**

64. The number of keys in a classic piano is: **88**

65. Titanic sank in: **1912**

66. The clock tower of London's 'Big Ben' was officially renamed in 2012 as: **The Elizabeth Tower**

67. Apollo 11 landed on the Moon on: **July 20, 1969**

68. With higher altitude, the gravitational pull of the

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Sept. 10: Asia's football body cancelled this year's AFC Cup because of the coronavirus pandemic.
Sept. 10: The Indian Air Force inducted into service five french-made Rafale fighter jets
Sept. 10: The European Parliament removed Myanmar's civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi from the "Sakharov Prize community" because of her "acceptance" of state crimes against the Rohingya community.
Sept. 10: The global death toll from the coronavirus pandemic topped 900,000.
Sept. 10: Iran's military launched an annual drill in the Gulf near the strategic Strait of Hormuz waterway.
Sept. 10: British actress Diana Rigg, who came to fame in the cult 1960s TV show, The Avengers, and enjoyed a distinguished and varied career on stage and screen from James Bond to Game of Thrones, died aged 82.
Sept. 11: Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi and Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar met in Moscow and reached a five-point consensus, including agreements the current border situation is not in their interests and that troops from both sides should quickly disengage and ease tensions, the two countries said in a joint statement.
Sept. 11: The Iranian navy deployed homegrown military equipment including a submarine and a cruise missile on the second day of exercises near the strategic Strait of Hormuz.
Sept. 11: US President Donald Trump announced a "peace deal" between Israel and Bahrain, the second Arab country to settle with its former foe in the last few weeks.
Sept. 11: Beijing will impose 'reciprocal restrictions' on all American diplomats on Chinese soil in response to curbs on its embassy personnel in the United States, China's foreign ministry announced.
Sept. 11: The US budget deficit hit an all-time high of $3 trillion for the first 11 months of this budget year.
Sept. 12: The Afghan government and the Taliban sat face to face on the negotiating table in Qatar to explore ways for 'lasting peace' in the war-plagued country.
Sept. 12: Vera Zvonareva and Laura Siegemund won the US Open women's doubles title, beating the third-seeded team of Xu Yifan and Nicole Melichar.
Sept. 13: Japan's Naomi Osaka won the US Open and clinch her third Grand Slam title.
Sept. 14: Austria's Dominic Thiem beat Alexander Zverev to win the US Open for his first Grand Slam title.
Sept. 14: A massive chunk of ice—larger than the city of Paris — has broken off from the Arctic's largest ice shelf because of warmer temperatures in Greenland, scientists said. The 113-square-kilometre block broke off the Nioghalvfjerdsfjorden glacier in Northeast Greenland, which the scientists said had been expected given the rising average temperatures.
Sept. 15: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the UAE sealed the historic agreements with a signing ceremony in White House.
Sept. 15: The 75th UN General Assembly session began. This year, because of the pandemic, world leaders will be staying away from New York and instead would send in pre-recorded videos of their speeches which will be broadcast as live. Their absence is because US government has notified that foreign leaders, without exception, will be quarantined for 14 days on arrival in New York.
Sept. 15: Sir David Attenborough won an Emmy Award for his work narrating the BBC documentary Seven Worlds, One Planet.
Sept. 15: The World Trade Organisation (WTO) upheld a complaint by China over additional duties slapped by the Trump administration on some $250 billion worth of Chinese goods, sparking outrage in Washington.

GK Tidbits

Earth: **Decreases**
69. The bestselling book series of the 21st century is: **The Harry Potter**
70. The football team also known as 'The Red Devils' is: **Manchester United**
71. The author of the Harry Potter series is: **J. K. Rowling**
72.: Bamako is the capital of: **Mali**
73. The nationality of the pop superstar Justin Bieber is: **Canadian**
74. The number of sides a hexagon has is: **6**
75. The southern Italian city usually credited as the birthplace of pizza is: **Naples**
76. Asian Bradman is the title given to: **Zaheer Abbas**
77. The number of horses on each team in a polo match is: **Four**
78. The British Grand Prix is held on the venue named: **Silverstone**
79. The tree that features in the middle of the flag of Lebanon is: **Cedar**
80. The science of dating through tree-ring growth is called: **Dendrochronology**
81. A tree having foliage that remains green and on the tree throughout the year is called: **Evergreen**
82. The trees that drop their leaves at the end of the growing season and produce new leaves in the spring are called: **Deciduous trees**
83. The tree whose leaf is found on the national flag of Canada is: **Maple**
84. The author of the book 'Glimpses of World History' was: **Jawaharlal Nehru**
85. The second most abundant metal in the Earth's crust is: **Iron**
86. The person who attended the Second Round Table Conference as Congress representative was: **MK Gandhi**
87. The number of ribs in a typical human ribcage is: **24**
88. A unit of conductance equal to the reciprocal of an ohm is: **mho**
89. The mho' is the unit for measuring: **Specific resistance**
90. The cell organelle responsible for cellular respiration is: **Mitochondrium**
91. The Scottish city of Glasgow lies on the banks of: **Clyde river**
92. The city that is known for its minarets and ancient wonders is: **Cairo**
93. Lima is the capital of: **Peru**
94. The city also known as the Eternal City is: **Rome**
95. The river that flows by Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, is: **Tigris**
96. The Red Cross flag was copied from the flag of: **Switzerland**
97. The only Portuguese-speaking nation in Latin America is: **Brazil**
98. The river that runs through the Grand Canyon in the US is: **Colorado**
99. Timbuktu, a city famous for its gold trade, is located in: **Mali**
100. The capital of Morocco is: **Rabat**

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MCQs / NATIONAL

1. Jammat-ul-Ahrar and Hezb-ul-Ahrar are two splinter groups of _____.
(a) Jaish-ul-Adl (b) *TTP*
(c) ISIS (d) JuD

2. Quantum astrophysicist Nergis Mavalvala, who has been recently appointed the new dean of the MIT School of Science, was born in _____.
(a) *Lahore* (b) Faisalabad
(c) Hyderabad (d) Karachi

3. Eminent painter and artist Shahid Jalal, who passed away on Aug 18, was a brother of noted historian and author _____.
(a) Ayesha Siddiqua
(b) Tehmina Durrani
(c) *Dr Ayesha Jalal*
(d) Saadat Hassan Manto

4. US Charge d'Affairs to Pakistan, Paul W. Jones, has been replaced by _____.
(a) *Angela Aggeler* (b) Eric Kasper
(c) Eau Claire (d) Stacy Cordery

5. On Aug 20, the Sindh cabinet approved to establish Kemari as the seventh district in Karachi after bifurcating the existing district _____.
(a) Korangi (b) *Karachi West*
(c) Malir (d) Karachi South

6. The President of Pakistan addresses both houses of parliament before the start of a parliamentary year under article _____ of the Constitution of Pakistan.
(a) 20 (b) 35
(c) 49 (d) *56 (3)*

7. On Aug 21, Navy chief, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi, inaugurated a state-of-the-art Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre in _____.
(a) Islamabad (b) *Karachi*
(c) Quetta (d) Gwadar

8. On Aug 21, the second round of China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue was held in _____, China.
(a) *Hainan*
(c) Beijing (b) Shanghai
(d) Guangzhou

9. On Aug 22, the Muslim 500 declared Prime Minister Imran Khan 'Man of the Year', while _____ was declared 'Woman of the Year'.
(a) Malala Yousafzai (b) *Rashida Tulaib*
(c) Ahed Tamimi (d) Haleema Yaqub

10. The first Pakistani university to get prestigious Jean Monnet Chair of the European Union is _____.
(a) PU, Lahore (b) *NUML, Islamabad*
(c) GCU, Lahore (d) Karachi University

11. On Aug 23, the government banned another militant outfit Khatam-Ul-Ambia, taking the number of outlawed organisations to_____.
(a) 60 (b) 65
(c) 70 (d) *77*

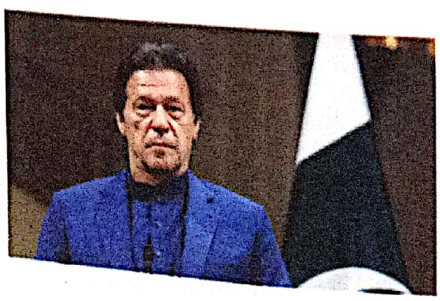
12. On Aug 23, Pakistan Navy inducted its first Type-054 Class Frigate which was built in _____ into its fleet.
(a) Malaysia (b) *China*
(c) Pakistan (d) Turkey

13. On Aug 25, the federal government notified the appointment of _____ as deputy governor of the State Bank of Pakistan for a period of three years.
(a) Jameel Ahmad (b) *Sima Kamil*
(c) Ashraf Wathra (d) Murtaza Syed

14. On Aug 26, the _____ High Court declared that unelected advisers and special assistants to the prime minister cannot exercise executive or administrative powers in the functioning of the government.
(a) Lahore (b) Peshawar
(c) *Islamabad* (d) Sindh

15. On Aug 26, the federal government appointed Zahid Hussain Junejo as member of the Indus River System Authority to represent _____.
(a) Balochistan (b) Punjab
(c) KP (d) *Sindh*

16. On Aug 28, Pakistan Navy and UK's Royal Navy, conducted bilateral naval exercise 'Passage' in _____.
(a) Malacca Strait



(b) North Arabian Sea
(c) *Gulf of Aden*
(d) Gulf of Kutch

17. On Aug 30, Pakistan's _____ became the first player to score 2000 runs and claim 50 wickets in men's T20Is.
(a) Shoaib Malik (b) Shadab Khan
(c) *M. Hafeez* (d) Imad Wasim

18. On Aug 31, Pakistan accepted the latest structure headed by the ETK earlier extended by _____ government, paving way for starting work on construction of the much-touted North-South Gas Pipeline Project.
(a) Kazakh (b) Turkish
(c) Turkmen (d) *Russian*

19. On Aug 31, the Punjab government created _____ full-fledged administrative departments in the South Punjab secretariat.
(a) 5 (b) 10
(c) 13 (d) *15*

20. On Sept. 02, Haider Ali became the _____ cricketer for Pakistan to score a fifty on T20I debut.
(a) *First* (b) Second
(c) Third (d) Fourth

21. On Sept. 03, _____ and Anwar Zaib Khan took oath as provincial ministers in the KP cabinet.
(a) Atif Khan (b) *Shahram Tarakai*
(c) Ajmal Wazir (d) Alam Khan

22. On _____, noted research scholar and an authority on Sufism Prof Pervez Khan Mahjoor Kheshgi died.
(a) Sept. 04 (b) *Sept. 06*
(c) Sept. 08 (d) Sept. 10

23. On Sept. 07, Pakistan nominated Mansoor Ahmad Khan, a veteran diplomat, as its new ambassador to_____.
(a) China (b) Germany
(c) *Afghanistan* (d) Russia

24. On Sept. 08, Punjab IGP _____ was removed and replaced with Inam Ghani.
(a) Muhammad Tahir (b) Arif Nawaz
(c) Kaleem Imam (d) *Shoaib Dastagir*

25. The first Inspector General of Punjab Police was _____.
(a) Mian Anwar Ali
(b) Muhammad Sharif Khan
(c) *Khan Qurban Ali Khan*
(d) Muhammad Anwar Afridi

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26. On Sept. 09, Chinese ambassador to Pakistan _____ was transferred back to headquarters in Beijing.
(a) *Yao Jing* (b) Wang Yi
(c) Wang Wenbin (d) Sun Weidong

27. Sept. 09, China designated _____ as its new ambassador to Pakistan.
(a) Wang Yu (b) Sun Weidong
(c) *Nong Rong* (d) Liu Jian

28. On Sept. 09, a Pakistani-American, Shahid Khan, emerged as the _____ richest man in the United States in 2020, with total worth of $7.8 billion.
(a) 37th (b) *66th*
(c) 76th (d) 121st

29. On Sept. 10, the Asian World News selected 10 world politicians for working hard to overcome the effects of Covid-19 on their compatriots and placed _____ at the top of the list.
(a) *Imran Khan* (b) Xi Jinping
(c) Angela Merkel (d) Narendra Modi

30. On Sept. 10, Pakistan and _____ signed an MoU for establishment of Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Affairs.
(a) Tajikistan (b) *Uzbekistan*
(c) Afghanistan (d) Indonesia

31. This year's SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting was held in _____.
(a) St. Petersburg (b) Ashgabat
(c) *Moscow* (d) Dushanbe

32. On Sept. 10, the _____ listed Pakistan among countries from whom the international community should learn how to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.
(a) UNGA (b) *WHO*
(c) CDC (d) WEF

33. Prominent religious scholar Allama Zamir Akhtar Naqvi passed away on _____.
(a) Sept. 12 (b) *Sept. 13*
(c) Sept. 14 (d) Sept. 15

34. On _____, Pakistan and China signed an agreement on Rashakai Special Economic Zone (RSEZ).
(a) Sept. 11 (b) Sept. 12
(c) Sept. 13 (d) *Sept. 14*

35. Rashakai Special Economic Zone will be established in KP over an area of _____.
(a) *1000 acres* (b) 1200 acres
(c) 1300 acres (d) 1500 acres

36. Thousands of schools and colleges across Pakistan reopened after the Covid-19-caused hiatus on _____.
(a) Sept. 11 (b) Sept. 12
(c) Sept. 13 (d) *Sept. 15*

37. Pakistan People's Party was formed in _____.
(a) *1967* (b) 1969
(c) 1970 (d) 1971

38. The first civilian to become Pakistan's chief martial law administrator was _____.
(a) *ZA Bhutto* (b) Noorul Amin
(c) Asghar Khan (d) Tikka Khan

39. Gorakh Hill Station is situated on one of the highest plateaus of:
(a) Balochistan (b) *Sindh*
(c) KP (d) GB

40. The Katpana Desert is located in _____.
(a) *Skardu* (b) Chitral
(c) Tharparkar (d) Badin

INTERNATIONAL

1. On Aug 16, the Israeli and _____ foreign ministers inaugurated direct phone services between their two countries.
(a) Saudi (b) Sudanese
(c) *UAE* (d) Bahraini

2. On Aug 16, a special session of the D-8 Commission, co-chaired by Turkey and _____, was held virtually.
(a) Pakistan (b) *Bangladesh*
(c) Malaysia (d) Iran

3. On Aug 16, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and _____ Defence Minister Mariusz Baszczak signed Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement.
(a) Australian (b) *Polish*
(c) German (d) French

4. On Aug 18, the UN-backed Special Tribunal for Lebanon found _____, a member of the Hezbollah, guilty over the 2005 murder of former Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri.
(a) Assad Sabra (b) Hasan Nasrallah
(c) *Salim Ayyash* (d) Hussein Oneissi

5. Hezbollah is the most powerful military and political group in _____.
(a) Jordan (b) *Lebanon*
(c) Iraq (d) Syria

6. On Aug 18, Oman's Sultan Haitham appointed Badr Albusaidi as his country's new _____.
(a) President (b) Prime Minister
(c) *Foreign Minister* (d) Finance Minister

7. On Aug 18, the UN designated the year _____ as International Year of Camelids to highlight their important role in communities.
(a) 2022 (b) 2023
(c) *2024* (d) 2025

8. On Aug 18, mutineer soldiers arrested _____ President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in the capital Bamako.
(a) *Mali's* (b) Somalia's
(c) Algeria's (d) Sudan's

9. On Aug 20, Iran unveiled two missiles—Haj Qassem and _____—that have a bigger range than before.
(a) Kayah (b) *Abu Mahdi*
(c) Hoveyzeh (d) Sehar

10. On Aug 20, the _____ connected the Arab world's first nuclear power plant to the country's grid and began providing electricity.
(a) Kuwait (b) Saudi Arabia
(c) *UAE* (d) Qatar

11. On Aug 21, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ordered to transform the _____ Museum, an ancient Orthodox church that became a mosque and then a popular Istanbul museum, into a mosque.
(a) Guray (b) *Kariye*
(c) Topkapi (d) Anitkabir

12. On Aug 21, President Erdogan announced that Turkey has made a historic discovery of gas in the _____ Sea.
(a) Mediterranean (b) Aegean
(c) *Black* (d) Marmara

13. On Aug 23, Miguel Oliveira claimed a first MotoGP for _____ and the Tech-3 team.
(a) Australia (b) *Portugal*
(c) Hungary (d) England

14. On Aug 24, Bayern Munich won the European Champions League for the _____ time.
(a) Fifth (b) *Sixth*
(c) Seventh (d) Eighth

15. Lisbon is the capital and the largest city of _____.
(a) Scotland (b) *Portugal*

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(c) Ireland (d) Brazil

16. On Aug 25, seasoned England pacer _____ became the first fast bowler to take 600 Test wickets.
(a) Stuart Broad (b) *James Anderson*
(c) Fred Trueman (d) Jonny Bairstow

17. On Aug 25, India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) charged 19 people, including _____ Pakistani nationals, over Pulwama attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir last year.
(a) *Seven* (b) Nine
(c) Eleven (d) Twelve

18. On Aug 25, the WHO declared that _____ was now free of the virus that causes polio.
(a) *Africa* (b) Nigeria
(c) Afghanistan (d) Pakistan

19. On Aug 25, Arnold Spielberg, the father of filmmaker _____ and an innovating engineer whose work helped make the personal computer possible, died.
(a) Theo Spielberg (b) *Steven Spielberg*
(c) Sam Firstberg (d) Tom Hanks

20. On Aug 27, _____ city council voted to strip former Spanish King Juan Carlos of all official awards he received from the city.
(a) Madrid's (b) *Barcelona's*
(c) Granada's (d) Valencia's

21. The world's richest person is _____.
(a) Bill Gates (b) Mark Zuckerberg
(c) *Jeff Bezos* (d) Jack Dorsey

22. The world's first-ever person to amass an over $200 billion fortune is _____.
(a) Bill Gates (b) Mark Zuckerberg
(c) *Jeff Bezos* (d) Jack Dorsey

23. On Aug 27, Christchurch mosque shooter _____ was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole—the first time such a sentence was handed down in New Zealand.
(a) Gerry Brownlee (b) Blair Cottrell
(c) *Brenton Tarrant* (d) None of these

24. The sport Naomi Osaka of Japan is related to is _____.
(a) Badminton (b) Table Tennis
(c) *Lawn Tennis* (d) Swimming

25. On _____, Japan's longest-serving prime minister, Shinzo Abe, announced to step down.
(a) *Aug 28* (b) Aug 29
(c) Aug 30 (d) Aug 31

26. On Aug 28, _____ released previously classified footage of the world's largest nuclear explosion.
(a) Japan (b) *Russia*
(c) China (d) USA

27. Russia tested its hydrogen bomb in October _____.
(a) 1958 (b) 1960
(c) *1961* (d) 1967

28. Chadwick Boseman was famous for his role in the ground-breaking superhero movie _____.
(a) *Black Panther* (b) Spider-Man 2
(c) Captain America (d) Batman Returns

29. On Aug 31, Mustapha Adib, a former diplomat, was nominated as the next prime minister of _____.
(a) Syria (b) Jordan
(c) *Lebanon* (d) Tunisia

30. A veteran powerbroker and former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, died on _____.
(a) *Aug 31* (b) Sept. 01
(c) Sept. 02 (d) Sept. 03

31. On Aug 31, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania banned embattled _____ President Alexander Lukashenko.
(a) *Belarusian* (b) Latvian
(c) Ukrainian (d) Polish

32. On Sept. 01, the _____ Commonwealth Games Association was reinstated as a member of the Commonwealth Games Federation.
(a) India (b) Zimbabwe
(c) *Maldives* (d) Nigeria

33. On Sept. 02, the United States imposed sanctions on ICC prosecutor _____ over her investigation into whether American forces committed war crimes in Afghanistan.
(a) Robert Fremr (b) Luis Moreno
(c) Peter Lewis (d) *Fatou Bensouda*

34. On Sept. 04, former foes _____ and Serbia agreed on a historic pact to normalise economic relations, in presence of President Donald Trump at the Oval office.
(a) Hungary (b) *Kosovo*
(c) Albania (d) Montenegro

35. On Sept. 06, Dr Naeem Wardag, the _____ PhD leader of Taliban, was appointed spokesman of their Qatar-based political council.
(a) *First* (b) Second
(c) Third (d) Fourth

36. On Sept. 07, China said that it had never recognized _____ as part of India as it was illegally established by India on the Chinese soil.
(a) Tibet (b) Ladakh
(c) *Arunachal Pradesh*
(d) Pengong Lake

37. On Sept. 09, Portuguese football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo became the second male player to reach a century of goals for a national team, after Ali Daei of _____.
(a) *Iran* (b) Saudi Arabia
(c) Egypt (d) Iraq

38. On _____ the Indian Air Force inducted into service five French-made Rafale fighter jets.
(a) Sept. 06 (b) Sept. 08
(c) *Sept. 10* (d) Sept. 12

39. On _____, the Afghan government and the Taliban sat face to face on the negotiating table in Qatar to explore ways for 'lasting peace' in the war-plagued country.
(a) Sept. 10 (b) Sept. 11
(c) *Sept. 12* (d) Sept. 14

40. On Sept. 15, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the foreign ministers of _____ and the UAE sealed the historic agreements with a signing ceremony in White House.
(a) Oman (b) Kuwait
(c) Sudan (d) *Bahrain*

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